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A "COOKBOOK"

BARRY A. BARTELS
HUBERT L. STACKHOUSE

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# REFLECTIONS IN A SERVING SPOON

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*A "COOKBOOK"*

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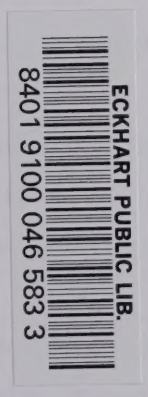
HUBERT L. STACKHOUSE



# Reflections Cafe

*Bill of Fare*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# Reflections Cafe

*Bill of Fare (cont.)*

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# *Foreword*

First of all, I thought my compositor said "foreplay", and I was a lot more interested in THAT than THIS. But, if convention requires that I do something "fore", ...Ah, Well!

Why a cookbook? Why not? At 400 pounds (my fighting weight when this opus was launched), I looked like I had at least an acquaintance with food. But, as the child of an eminently successful cook, I may have some useful information to pass on. Admiring my mother's proficiency, I could not help but be interested in other good cooks who could emulate...and in several cases, exceed...my mother's success at the range.

And...and...I can claim some small success in the kitchen myself. Simply put: "I have been around cooks and good cooking most of my life; I enjoy the kitchen (but not the dirty pans); I could have made a decent living and been happy as a cook. And, I could learn to imbibe like Julia Child, if I had to do so to qualify as a cookbook guru.

So, when my cohort, the nefarious Barry Bartels of Bartels Fabulous Cheesecakes (only slightly more expensive than the Star of Africa) asked little old me to turn my word-processor to a cookbook...Well, Hey, he didn't have to ask me twice!

So, here follow about 25 recipes of my acquaintance, culled from Mother's cookbooks, Aunt Winnifred, Cousin Freida, Sister-in-Law Bodey, Pat Walters Leffler, "Mother" Walters (Pat's aunt), niece Mary Ann Houser, and anyone else who didn't guard their recipes well enough.

Added to it are the recipes collected by cohort, Barry Bartels of Florence, KY, his wife, Jenny Parish Bartels, his Mother-in-Law Ernestine G. Parish, her niece Rina Parish of Fort Wayne, and others.

It is my hope that you can eat the recipes and endure the blather that so oddly seems to please my readers.

Hubert L. Stackhouse
(West 7th Street Escoffier)
September 1995

# *Editor's Note*

The American Heritage Dictionary gives the definition of gourmet as:

> ***gour·met*** *(go͝or-mā′, go͝or′mā′) noun A connoisseur of fine food and drink.*[1]

By this definition I think that many of us would qualify as gourmets. But the dictionary does not give a definition of the term *gourmet chef*, but people use the term all the time. My definition of a gourmet chef would be an exceptional cook who has great sense of style and not a little bit of attitude.

What you now have in your hands would not be considered by most to be a gourmet cookbook but I tend to disagree. While most of the recipes in this book probably would not be served in the "Finest Restaurants", you can't deny that they have a certain sense of style.

So enjoy the book; try some of the recipes; who knows what horizons may open before you. Bon Apetit.

---

# Acknowledgments

Cookbooks don't just happen, even considering the egos of confirmed or fancied good cooks. Following the shallow-water triumph of H. Stackhouse ("On Further Reflections", Waander's Bookmark, $9^{00}$, copies mawkishly engrossed by author), B. Bartels of Ft. Wayne / Florence, KY, suggested that H. Stackhouse draw of his many and varied experiences in the food game, on his contacts with celebrated family cooks, and "off" the resulting culinary jewel for the Holiday trade of 1995.

Not having ever "done" a cookbook, we were not hindered by any conventions of publishing. One would supply the cheerful chatter that has been modestly successful in the past, along with recipes from his esteemed mother and a host of cooking friends. The other would supply recipes, of course, and invaluable expertise on the computer. Together, they would launch themselves toward a higher income bracket!(Fantasy!)

So, Mother S, friends, and perhaps even kind strangers were recruited to fluff out the work. Here, then follows a list of these kindly souls:

The Amish, borrowed through Ernestine Parish
The Clayton Baker Family, obtained through Robert Wilder
Barry Bartels, of Ft. Wayne, Florence, KY and parts known
Jenny Bartels, the light of his life and a very good cook in her on right
Rose Buttermore
The Calumet 1912 cookbook, and Gertrude(?)
Cousin Freida Dailey
Coleen DeCamp, *the Mother,* of Aurora, IN ...and
Rick DeCamp, *the son,* of Rising Sun, IN
Maude Gatten, of the 1912 St. Joe Hotel
Niece Mary Ann Houser
Aunt Winnifred Milner
The Old Testament
Ernestine Parish, of Auburn, Ft. Wayne, Florence, KY
Rina Parish, a Ft. Wayne niece
Bertha (Bodey) Stackhouse, daughter-in-law of...
Hazel L. Stackhouse, the primary source
Mrs. Betty Gushwa of Ft. Wayne, and trusted friend Beverly Snyder

Hubert L. Stackhouse, the son
Mrs. Melvin Walters, via Pat Leffler,a niece, and Ruth Walters, a daughter-in-law
Vivian Watts, retired educator
Berneice Wible, via Martha Falka & Dr. Paul Trausch

...and the manifold kindness' of Judy Waanders of Waanders' Bookmark, who thrusts these varied works toward commercial solvency.

To all of the foregoing, a sincere, high calorie "Thank You"

# APPETIZERS

# What Makes the Good Cook?

Probably better than any single recipe that we could offer would be the basic knowledge...some underlying secret of all good cooking...if such exists. To determine that, we have conducted an unofficial survey of a number of good cooks of our acquaintance, asking them a series of questions:

1. Is there some single attribute that good cooks have in your opinion?
2. Is there some single, underlying principle of good cooking?
3. Who (modestly exclude yourself) is the best cook you have ever met?
4. What would you consider the cardinal sin of bad cooking?

Here are my own responses:

1. For however they learned it, good cooks know the function of their ingredients. They may know, for example, a half a dozen ways to cause pastry to rise, and understand why buttermilk and soda may be better in a given recipe than baking powder, or folded-in egg whites.
2. Every good cook knows the IMPERATIVE of fine ingredients. If the recipe calls for butter, margarine is NOT an acceptable substitute. Spare yourself the embarrassment of a co-worker of my sister-in-law, who complained that the cookies didn't taste right, and then admitted to making a half-dozen "cost-cutting" substitutions in the ingredients.

3. All Round Cook - my mother, naturally. But…she wasn't anything special on salads, or the grill. She was a superb farm-style cook, a dazzling pie-baker, and a good learner. She was a fine organizer and a great expediter. She could have managed a great European hotel kitchen with the best of them. Self-preservation keeps me from nominating any others, but I have known lots of excellent cooks, and verified my choices by putting my feet under their tables.
4. Cardinal sins? Getting too cute for the occasion. Making a dish so elaborate that, like the Texan in "Saratoga Trunk", you're tempted to ask for the ketchup just to put the chef in his place! Simplicity is an overlooked virtue in cooking. If your recipes are works of art, give them to the Metropolitan! There is after all, a special place in Heaven for those who can prepare a perfect hamburger, while a number of "great chefs" ought to be cooking over the fires of Hell for such dishes as the late Al Capp's "Roast Rump of Tree Dwelling Elephant with Ecstasy Sauce".

# Move Over, Escoffier...or *Great Cooks I Have Known*

*(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)*

People gaze on my figure abundant, listen to my chatter about foods, and frequently reach a nice, logical, wrong conclusion: that I am a gourmet. Not so, me. I am truly the size that I am ("pleasingly plump", or with "fully-proportioned figure"...or even "stylishly stout"), not because of good food that I have consumed, but rather too much indifferent or downright bad food that I ate in moments of frustration or boredom. It's not that I don't know what good food is, and what a gourmet cook can do, but I'm not their willing victim to the extent that charitable friends would think.

But, of recent years, I have become an avid watcher of the TV cooking demonstration shows--the Romanolas on Italian cooking, the Frugal Gourmet (who must preach with a fry-pan in his pulpit and would do better to abandon the latter in favor of the former), Great Chefs of East/West/Southwest/Chicago/San Francisco, and even the Great Chefs of the World. Julia Child? One of the great comediennes of the world, especially after she has been to the cooking sherry and champagne too often!

But, has there been no one in my own life that was worthy of a few Michelin stars? Indeed, I think there has been:

Maude Gatten, of the St. Joe Hotel, circa 1912--who taught my mother the one truly delectable meatloaf recipe I know.

Herman Tritch, of the Auburn Diner, who took the humble hamburger and raised it to ambrosial heights--and gave his bowling team one if they won two games of an evening!

My Grandmother Harriet Onstott Bills, mistress of the flour bowl. All common baked goods were made in an unmeasured arena of flour in a large wooden bowl. Strictly "by-touch" cooking, and *witchcrafty* to watch. I never knew the lady, but would a boy's mother lie to him? Mama said she was extraordinary.

A Sister, a Sister-in-law, and a Cousin; who apologized profusely about their baking and turn out peach pies that Julia Child could only dream about.

A revered Aunt, whose ice-box cookies and crispy butterscotch cookies remain an indelible memory more than thirty years after her demise, as does her hickory nut cake (with NO

DIRECTIONS ever recorded for her amount of flour, her oven time, or her oven temperature). "A good cook would just know, now wouldn't they?"

A mere slip of a girl from Florence, KY, who can extemporize championship results for almost anything. Just sit her before a restaurant spice cabinet and watch her repair the profaned potato salad dressing; or spin up a gourmet cheese ball strictly by instinct; or prepare volcanic jalapeno pepper sauces; or turn out a peach cobbler to die for.

And her mother, whose ability to adapt recipes to her own taste--with spectacular improvement--is unmatched.

And my own mother. I'm prejudiced, of course. But she made 115,000 pies in her career as a restaurant cook. She could have made those remarkable crusts blindfolded, literally. Her mincemeat was legendary; her pumpkin pies prodigious; her butterscotch and banana or pineapple creams a pure delight on the tongue. Secrets? Don't work pie crust beyond an absolute minimum; a two crust fruit pie must stew (and bubble out, often into the oven) to be done; home made bread must bake a full hour; the toughest chicken can be gotten done quite nicely by putting clean, large spike nails between the pieces; and the best fresh fruit pies (peach, strawberry) can be done the simplest--baked crust, sugared fruit, and whipped cream, period.

Are there gourmet cooks yet to be found? Sure...try the pie bakers at Bob's in Woodburn; the whole steer hamburgers at the St. Joe Lions at the Fair; steaks at Shopoff's, on US 24 south of Ft Wayne...or at Sam's in Blakeslee.

And a parting word for my hero-chefs on TV, "You can't make my great cooks list until you forget the caviar, the mousses, the pates, the champagne sauces. Any meal that is going to cost $50 a person is show biz, not down home cookin'".

# A Little Witchcraft in the Kitchen

*(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)*

Let darkest Africa have its witchcraft; let the tropics have their voodoo priestesses working their old smoky magic. For sheer mystery, give me the old-time "pinch 'n dab" cook anytime. And, the results were edible!

One of my grandmothers was a pinch 'n dab artist (sadly, the other could scarcely boil water). My mother vividly recounted the mystery and the achievement of that common (for the 1880's) method of cooking.

First, "What in the world do you need measurements for?" seemed to be their watchwords. Grandmother Bills began with a large flour bowl, holding perhaps 5 pounds. I suppose the only occasion when this wasn't the foundation was for a fine cake whose flour must be double sifted (and because the batter was fairly liquid) and contained in a mixing bowl. But pie crust, biscuits, noodles, dumplings, rivels...just the flour bowl. There was, of course, an even more hair-raising foundation, in which a mound of flour was piled on a breadboard and things began from this unbounded heap. Modern European chefs can yet be seen on TV gourmet shows using this method...but the cowards usually measure out the basic amount of flour they will need.

Well, now...she would make a depression in the flour, and into that put her moist ingredients. Pie crust? Probably lard first, worked to large crumbs and then united with a minimum of water and hand mixing. Such mixtures were best kept cool, and hand temperatures DID affect them if you "wooled" them about. When the dough was united, it could be lifted out on a rolling board for final forming...or balled and refrigerated (ice-boxed, that is) for future use.

No cook was going to ruin her handiwork by working too much flour into her dough while rolling things out. You could have easily converted melt-in-the-mouth cookies to hockey pucks by such a mistake, as indeed did the mother of a friend of mine. Here, indeed, was a large part of the true artistry. That cook understood...she just came to know, the textures of her recipes. She could probably have identified, blindfolded, what the final product was to be by a single touch on the dough. My own mother's superb touch with pie dough was first a matter of feel and then confirmation by sight that the crumbs of flour and shortening were just the right size to invite the water.

Secondly, the cook understood the function of each ingredient. She knew HOW sour milk and soda did their leavening together; how yeast and sugar teamed up in bread; what the various shortenings, animal or vegetable, would do to texture. She could handle baking ammonia, poisonous in itself, to produce lemon snap cookies that are now a lost art.

Thirdly, she was an athlete of the kitchen. Baking ten or more pies of a Saturday morning took stamina. Mixing, kneading, and forming 10-15-20 loaves of bread left a girl with shoulders that Nordic Track-letes might well envy. And, not rarely did she split her own wood to heat the ovens; not rarely did she do her own wash-up without aid of Kitchen Aide. And this much effort attended simply everyday life. When the threshers came, it doubled, and perhaps re-doubled.

"Still, wasn't there more 'magic' than just that?" Yep! Consider Aunt Winnifred's celebrated recipe for hickory nut cake. "Recipe?" Yes, to a point. She must have gotten in the hands of some domestic revisionist and been forced to speak in teaspoons and cups, but only so far. This vaunted cake recipe did not offer such trivialities as oven temperatures, baking time, OR FLOUR. Nor, for that matter, did my mother's celebrated Lady Baltimore cake, the pride of her family. You just knew that you added flour until "it worked well", or "it was silky" or the dough ball "thumped just ever so".

And when was it done? Why, when a BROOMSTRAW (clean!) could be inserted and come out clean.

# FATHER IN THE KITCHEN

My father pretty well understood that the kitchen was woman's province. Man, the fields; man, the garden; and especially, **man, the garage.** When Father did get into the kitchen, it was usually because Mother was on one of her cooking jobs. (True, I had sisters who could have "spelled" Mother, but they cooked for us . . . no more often than total eclipses!) {And hey-oh! I can darn with the best of them . . . if a bit flamboyantly with the red wool yarn. My buttons are things of beauty and eternal security!}

But, Father and the kitchen. Three memories:

1. Boiled wheat for breakfast. It didn't make it! I know now that there is a method of making boiled wheat palatable--the so-called "frumenty" of the Bible (and a 3,000 year old recipe, that!) Father just boiled it and set it before us. I had long since learned the virtue of pitching in and eating anything and everything while my siblings engaged in pointless jurisdictional battles at the table, but the wheat . . . NOT!

2. Fried dandelion blossoms. THESE MADE IT! They are a loving memory of life on Phillip Street, 1932. Father gathered perhaps a half-gallon of "glorious yellow" (I am as much a dandelion fan as Opus in *Bloom County*!). He washed and cleaned them rather carefully, cutting away any trace of a stem under the blossom, for therein lay the bitter "milk" *(note: If your Dandelion Wine has a nasty tang, "stem milk" is likely the reason.).* He then dredged them in flour, ands fried them in butter *(I think).* My memory, over the ensuing 60 years, is that they tasted like fried mushrooms. Of course, there is a voice of cynical asperity somewhere about that will claim that you could fry a coconut fiber doormat in butter

and it would be tasty! But they were good, they were! We also ate dandelion greens, but they were a product of Mother's cooking, after BEING VERY CAREFULLY CLEANED. (Cooked with vinegar, sugar, & bacon chips - Great!)

3. Father and the chickens . . . a gritty episode. If you wanted chicken, you bought it live and butchered and dressed it yourself. Oh sure, some farm ladies would bring cleaned and dressed birds to town on Saturdays, but **to pay someone 25¢ for cleaning a chicken? NOT!** Soooo, on the occasion in point, Father was in the kitchen, getting ready to draw the birds *(Note: That's de-gut them, for you city slickers!)* He had dipped the decapitated dominickers *(poetic flourish)* in boiling water, pulled off all of the feathers AND the skin off the feet, singed them over a burning newspaper, and was now washing and scraping the bird. If it had been a darker feathered bird, like a Plymouth Rock, he'd have been looking carefully for the pinfeathers. So too, any bird slaughtered near molting time, when they became a mass of pinfeathers.

That done, he noted how greasy the old hens were. The heat of the boiling water and the manipulation of the cleaning process would have caused the skin oils to flow abundantly. What to do? Mother would simply have continued to wash with cold water until the situation abated. Father, ever resourceful, remembered a longtime friend of his days as a mechanic, and reached for the bar of Lava Soap®. After a fashion, it worked. The chickens were clean, THEY WERE! The drawing and disjointing were accomplished. I cannot recall whether Mother came upon the desecration, or Father simply bragged of it to her . . . or she had to wait until she bit into a piece of the gritty chicken. But, the fine pumice of the soap would have taken up residence in every feather follicle . . . and some of the soapy flavor too!

Now, you must understand, that this was the girl who had once punted a checkerboard from between his knees when she caught him cheating *(at checkers)* early in their marriage! She COULD, and DID, make his culinary sin known. If . . . IF he ever cleaned another chicken, you may be sure that Lava did not figure in the equation any longer.

So . . . Father generally left the kitchen to Mother (a bit of wisdom that escaped an ancient brother-in law of mine). And, Mother never attempted to repair the family car. To each his own arena.

Farewell Random Thought: There's a little bit of Tim Allen of *Tool Time* in a lot of homes, Father and the Lava Soap®, Father and the washing machine episode (one of the late reflections in "On Further Reflection"). I can remember also Louise Dickinson Rich's husband, delivering one of their children in a lonely Maine cabin, telling his wife that he learned how to oil a newborn baby by lubricating a piston when he was rebuilding an engine!

# On The Pleasures Of Doing Dishes (?)

As a child, the prospect of having to do dishes (usually reserved to the girls in the family) was only exceeded in horror by having to carry out ashes **while being observed** by my peers on the school ground that bordered on my Eleventh Street home. I weathered the latter; I should surely have perished had I been caught drying dishes in a dishtowel apron. It may be said that the former had some possibility of equalization: toss a snowball, enclosing a lump of coal, at them; and they gave you some modicum of respect. But, there was no salvation for the apron bit...**none**!

Then, I entered the Army, and once for 60 days straight, I was on permanent KP, doing the dishes (silverware) for 2500 men per meal, three meals a day. That equals approximately one million, three hundred fifty thousand (1,350,000) individual pieces of "silver". Eventually, I shed the permanent KP status (to become a clerk-typist), but I never forgot the silverware. As lorn and horny as a bachelor (me) could be, still even Helen of Troy couldn't have lured me to a dishtank.

I have grown older; forget the "L & H" designation; I now do dishes. Why the great change?:

1. I am still a bachelor. On those infrequent occasions when some well-meaning person "bellies-up" to the dishtank, I can count on days or weeks of confusion as I try to find out what they did with my favorite utensils. I am favored with a young man who cheerfully does those things about my home that I can no longer manage; but if he is ever found to be the victim of foul play **and** it occurs after he again misplaces my favorite butcher knife, I must then be counted as a prime suspect! Spare me from those who would rearrange my life, including my dishes.

2. Even if the above aforementioned helpers could get things back where they

belonged, what creditable cook would let them touch his cast-iron cookware! They might be permitted to restore some sheen to the copper bottomed pans, yes. But cast-iron, properly seasoned? Never! **Never!!** **Never!!!** That crust of carbon and fat/cooking oil/grease is **sacred!** I tell you! Give them a vegetable brush and send them off to clean their Grandfather's pipes instead.

3. If you let them anywhere into your domestic arrangements, they are going to notice things you'd rather they didn't. So Betty Crocker would blanch with horror at your housekeeping? If it's yours, and you're comfortable...what the hey!

4. I don't like dirty fingernails or the garden dirt that becomes ingrained in the rougher parts of my hands. One good round with the Ivory Snow® (which I'd like you to believe I always use) or some cheaper detergent (which I actually **do** use), and I'm ready for the Queen's Tea, yeah!

5. And...there is an in definable feeling that comes over one when you compare the neatened sink area with what went before. The satisfaction of a solitary? Whatever.

**But**....I do not, repeat **NOT**, wear the apron! (Except when eating cornbread with hot syrup, which drips ever so!)

# MAIN COURSE

# Dangerous Permutations

There are obviously a lot of people who are good cooks, and everything they touch turns to "cuisine". Perhaps it's the generally good results (albeit sometimes assisted by box mixes and Ms. Crocker) that have made some of these failures amusing to me. To wit:

Of my accomplished mother, none that I can recall.

Of my father (who really didn't have much responsibility in the kitchen), only the time that he sought to remedy the greasiness of a couple of stewing hens by washing them in Lava® Soap. Mother's reaction was emphatic.

Of my own? Well, once I conceived a sure delicacy to be known as "Hubert's Bologna Surprise". It was a round of German bologna surmounted by a piece of sharp American cheddar and fused together under a broiler. It very nearly surprised Mother into the hospital…one "lulu" of a digestive upset she got from it.

And, while I cannot remember the propellant used, I once managed to get a pot of corn meal mush / oatmeal (memory you know), on the ceiling of the kitchen at 11th Street. Werner von Braun would have been proud.

But the best tales of this ilk that I know are of friends or acquaintances. Should they recognize their "achievements" in these lines…Who's going to know but you and me?

The Lady and the Cookies She had been forced by circumstance to go to work at the age of 15 (telephone operator). She missed those hours at mother's side when domestic skills would have been polished. She married at 35, and early on had to serve her husband the results of "pinch and dab" recipes given to her.

Cookies it was. The recipe said "add flour until they work well". Sticky at first, flour was added. Turned from the bowl onto the rolling/cutting board, more flour was added. They worked better, they did; more flour was added. This "adding" apparently went on longer than I have space to tell. As the dear lady was telling me of the experience, many years later, her loving husband interjected, "And, yes sir, Stacky , I soaked the damned things in boiling coffee for ten minutes, and it never fazed them!" I guess you could make hockey pucks that way.

Using Your Noodle(s)? Among Mother's other honors was that of supervising the meal service for her Church's religious assemblies...a service providing more than 3,000 meals a weekend. Mother planned the menus (with the chauvinistic help of males in her congregation). She instructed on the ordering, directed the cooking and serving, and held her peace when her church finally decided that a mere woman should not be giving instructions to MEN! But until then...

For the Friday evening supper, it had to be something that could be prepared in the brief time from the dismissal of school (the assemblies were frequently held in public schools) until the evening session fired off at perhaps 7:30. Pre-cooked beef or chicken brought to the site in electric roasters and noodles was a very workable combination. So, on the occasion question, about 4 or 5 weeks before the assembly, Mother sent out the call to surrounding congregations that they should provide so many dozens of eggs, made into noodles. One of the nearby congregations had a lady, whom Mother knew, who was of much heart, but little knowledge. She had never made noodles in her life, but gallantly decided to try. She got some sort of instructions, and had at it. After all, with just flour, eggs, salt, and water...what could go wrong? Well, you could have a problem when it came to rolling them out, or you could forget to dry them before you sacked them up. Gallantly she mixed the dough. She had never owned a rolling pin so she fed the dough through the wringer of her washing machine! It emerged about half-inch thick in the middle; gallantly, she cut them into some sort of strips **WITHOUT DRYING ENOUGH** (if at all); gallantly, she sacked them up...in plastic.

Mother never let the lady know how they came out, finally. She also swore her kitchen staff to secrecy (But Mother, the Lady, and about all of that Staff have now gone off to that Great Heavenly Noodle Factory in the Sky.) For, when Mother met those noodles, there was no need to open the package. They were furry, and green! Chia-pet noodles if you will!

And, for a breather, how many tales could be told of the results of mistaking one spice can for another (try putting mustard in your pumpkin pies, for instance). Or mistaking salt for sugar and putting a cup of the former in a batch of cookies, of switching powdered sugar for flour and trying to make your baked steak gravy with the former, of missing Mother's instructions about browning a meringue on a cream pie and serving your soft pies with RAW meringue...while telling folks, "Yes, sir! Hazel Stackhouse taught me how to make these pies!" And not realizing that a rice pudding is to be made with precooked rice (The father, a loving parent if one ever lived, could only eat the first spoonful of his dear daughter's pudding.).

In closing, perhaps it would be well to admit that Mother did not always have a triumph in the kitchen, but it was through no misapplication or a recipe. Hers were more the failings of starting something on the stove and then getting a phone call. Smoke! Or, Mother put the quart of string beans in the canner and then forgot them until (phone again) the house took on that peculiar hot metal smell. She foolishly cracked the "dogs" on the canner lid , thereby admitting cold air into the super-heated canner. A resulting explosion of one can blew a hot string bean up her dress sleeve, leaving an ugly blister that

took weeks to heal. And, the steam burns on her forehead gave her a distinctly "boiled-owl" look for weeks. "No more canning", she vowed, and she held to her resolution nearly a year!

Perhaps in closing, it is the knowledge of these occasional mishaps that heighten our enjoyment of our cooking triumphs.

# Amish Sugar Cookies

*(I must interject here. My mother-in-law having been the lady who had the tragic cookie/hockey puck incident that there is one type of cookie that she can make. This recipe makes a delicious soft sugar cookie that almost melts in your mouth.)*

**Amish Sugar Cookies**

*Cream Together:*

2 cups Crisco oil
4 eggs
3 cups sugar

*Add:*

2 cups buttermilk
3 tsps. vanilla
1 ½ tsps. salt
2 tsps. soda
½ tsp. ginger

*Mix Well and Add:*

6 cups flour
2 tsps. baking powder

Drop by spoonfuls on greased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with sugar and nutmeg if desired. Bake at 375° to 400° for 8 to 10 minutes.

# West 7th Street Sukiyaki

A few years ago (1969) a fellow callow youth and I journeyed to Far Japan for an international Lions Convention. While there, we partook of the tourist cuisine (at those prices, the locals could little afford those goodies). Their "display" dishes were very labor intensive, and the ingredients for the sukiyaki began with Matasuzaka beef, then retailing for $40 per pound (comparable to Kobe Beef, at an even higher price!) The meals cost us about $12 apiece, as did the delectable tempura. Our reaction was,

to the taste: "Delightful!"
to the cost: "Once in a lifetime is enough!"
to the expertise: "Hey Papa-San! We could do that back in the old St. Joe Valley!"

And so, it came to pass, that when we returned to the unsuspecting arms of our community, we invited all those who had been so kind as to give us the nice "going away" party...we invited them to a sukiyaki dinner. A friend volunteered the use of his home, which had one room capacious enough for the specially built table we used, a four foot circular table on ten-inch legs! This allowed our guests to experience bone-wrenching discomfort while undergoing the witchery of chop-stickery. And as HE is my witness, a good time was had by all!

And since recipes are the foundation of this tome, here's how you may re-create this magic moment.

**The Equipment** *(For each four guests):*

One Cook
One large electric fry-pan
One pair, looooooong cooking chopsticks
One two-quart saucepan (for rice)
One small waterbath (to heat the sake)
Four medium soupbowls
Four small soupbowls

Four small sake cups
Four pair disposable chopsticks

**The Ingredients**

¼ lb. Finest quality beef *per guest* (Japanese use Matasuzaka or Kobe beef $50/lb. currently)
small piece suet
2 10 oz. Packages frozen spinach - thawed
1 small can, each, bean sprouts, water chestnuts, button mushrooms, bamboo shoots
1 #2 ½ can yam noodles, or cooked dry yam noodles to equal
1 ½ lb. unprocessed rice (it must be gummy when cooked, do not rinse)
2 bunches green onions sliced diagonally, tops reserved for soup garnish
Soy sauce
Beef bullion
2 oz. Dried shitake mushrooms, reconstituted in 1 qt. boiling water
1 bottle sake

**Plan of Battle**

| | |
|---|---|
| Hours before | Arrange ingredients tray. Let the artist in you loose here a gorgeous display is half of this meal, anyhow. Make Betty Crocker proud of you. |
| 30 Minutes before | Start the rice cooking, make up the bullion, soak the shitake mushrooms |
| 15 Minutes before | Cook the dried yam noodles (if you are using these), put sake flask in waterbath, but keep it under 140°, lest the alcohol boil off |
| The Guests Arrive | Take names of next-of-kin, preferred hospital and doctor. Then, seat guests, enjoying all the while the merry creaking of joints. When the moans have subsided, serve the soup. |
| The Soup | Ladle bullion into the small bowls, float one button mushroom in each bowl, sprinkle with cross-cut onion tops, and garnish with dried seaweed. **Chopsticks Only!** (Inform them that an Oriental will lift the bowl to just under his chin, "chopstick" the solid ingredients, and drink the remainder. Slurping permissible). Orientals might well serve this soup in the middle of the meal, but you'll have enough "culture shock" without that! |
| The Sukiyaki | Put the fry-pan at 350° to start. Lubricate the surface with the lump of suet. Then, quickly, quickly, lay in the skillet 8 slices of paper thin sliced beef (Have your butcher cut it for you in advance). Immediately, turn them one by one, and |

then immediately push them to one side and reduce the temperature to 250°. Sprinkle the beef lightly with soy sauce. It will be nicely done when the rest of the dish is finished. – Next, add the ingredients from your display tray, taking great care that each is placed in the same relative position it had on the tray, and that they are mixed together as little as possible! (The Chinese may do it that way, but not the Japanese!) Begin with the spinach, and allow an extra 10 minutes if you are brave enough to use fresh leaf spinach (not really recommended). Then sprouts, chestnuts, mushrooms (both shitake and button), and maybe bamboo shoots, if you have 'em. Keep the pan moist by adding the mushroom liquor and the beef bullion as needed. You want a spooning quantity of liquid at the finish. As you turn the cooking ingredients, again be careful not to mix them. Total cooking time so far, about 20 minutes.

Serving the guests — If you've had a lull, give them a chopstick lesson. If they can write with a pencil, they can learn chopsticks in a minute.—For each guest, in a medium bowl place a couple of tablespoons of the good, gummy rice, leveled off. On that base, and in the same position as on the tray and in the fry-pan, place the unmixed ingredients. Sprinkle the spinach well with soy sauce before serving—you could change a spinach-hater into a fan! When you have a bowl "loaded", spoon some pan liquor over it.

And, when you have the four of them served, reload the fry-pan for round #2. They'll express preferences "less of this, more of that", in the second round. **You will not have time to join them in the meal.**

Other considerations: Serve the yam noodles on a separate plate—they're beautiful, just by themselves. Smoked oysters and canned octopus make fine appetizers with this meal, and are a hilarious challenge to any Purdue-type "meat and potatoes" eaters. (Yes, Virginia, I did try them on a Purdue man once!)

The sake? Heated to about 140° poured into "cutesy-poo" little cups, and drunk with a flip. That could put Julia Child on the wagon. Yuuck!

Dessert. Not really in Oriental demand, but try one perfect canned peach half with a couple of red gardenia petals on it.

Scholarly note: That Matasuzaka or Kobe beef is authentically higher than a cat's back, and you would be too if you had been pen-raised, had your daily fodder cut and carried to you, had been given both bottled beer to drink and massaged with straw to

force the fat to the surface into the tissue, kept until 4 years old and perhaps 50%larger than American steers, and then whisked off to that Great McDonalds in the Sky! In '78 on another tour of Japan, I showed a friend the prices in the meat department of the Matsukaya Department Store in Tokyo, and the prices were the $35 per pound class (and the sukiyaki dinner was up to $22).

But, "a grand old recipe". NOT! Most of the Japanese would not have been able to afford beef, now or centuries ago. Sukiyaki means something like "cooked on a plowshare", and is thought to be no more than 100 years old at most.

Atmosphere? Some recorded samisen or koto music twangs up the place just fine! I always cook in my yukata (summer Japanese kimono), it has sash sleeves, sewn shut, and each will hold nearly a week's laundry, not to mention lots of cooking tools!

Hate someone real good! Use bean curd in the recipe. The overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder were gourmet food compared to bean curd! Your samisen or koto music will sound to some a bit like J.S. Bach. Tell them it's really by your friend Johann Sebastian Suzuki!

And the best sukiyaki I ever ate? Well, may Hotei-bara have a bigger belly than mine if it wasn't **The Nikko Inn** in North Cincinnati, O-High-O!!!

So, sayonara, sukiyaki seekers!

# A Party Every Night!

I've been around foods all of my life. My mother was a commercial cook of renown. I was in the 72nd and 73rd Mess Corps in the US Army. I handled the Concessions for schools for nearly 25 of my teaching years. And, in the summers of 1983 and 1987, I "dabbled" in a catering kitchen.

The last two of these were provocative pleasures. I accepted no payment for my spotty services; occasional leftovers (splendid fare), and a complementary catering of my mother's funeral dinner, but no formal pay. It was a pleasure. I am a natural putterer, especially with foods. I could do all the salads and cheese & relish trays, and take all the time that I wanted to give them cosmetic impact. After all, I wasn't going to be held to any standard of cost effectiveness when I hadn't any real cost!

I suppose the most stimulating thing about it was that you were throwing a party every night, so to speak. You got to play with expensive foods and the finest of ingredients, and someone else paid for it! And by and large, the parties were eminently successful. Our catering manager was a woman of high and inflexible standards; done her way, it would be a dandy!

But, on three occasions, it wasn't a dandy. It was a crying shame, though no fault of hers. The West Virginia hills draw her like a magnet, and over the Memorial Day holiday of 1987, she would return there . . . IF I would backstop a newly hired cook. Some cook!

I was to share the kitchen with a replacement cook who could and did do everything -- POORLY! Ah! She bragged up a storm, and it is likely that which got her the job from our nice but inexperienced owner. And had she been able to cook as well as she bragged, we should have deserved Four Michelin stars. As it was, we were probably lucky that the Board of Health didn't shut us down!

**Disaster #1** . . . not totally her fault, but she participated. We were doing a function for 150, a chicken barbecue. We borrowed the Legion's half-barrels to cook the chicken in the host's driveway. Spring; cold; windy; and the heat ended up in Ohio. Runs were made to the catering hall to cook chicken in the steam cauldron, but it was still

rubbery and bloody.

The meal called for baked beans. How many? The frump should have known, but she made up three 4' steam table pans full (probably enough for 200 people, and only 65 actually showed up.) But, a kitchen interloper of her acquaintance talked her into preparing yet a fourth pan of beans. Boy Oh Boy, did we have beans left over! Said interloper was later to figure in Disaster #3 by making up about **5 gallons** of mustard/dill pickle relish/salad dressing to be put on the potato salad. Think baby diapers!

The only thing that survived that day was MY melon boats, hellishly expensive in the off-season, but pretty to look at and good to eat. That's about all that satisfied them, and we were never bothered by their custom again.

**Disaster #2** . . . the Teddibly, Teddibly Important Family's Reunion. Just a week later: broasted chicken, baked steak, mashed & gravy, veggie, & melon boat. She claimed to know how to operate the chicken broaster, which demands 12-15 minutes of 275° frying under pressure. The time IS critical. She paid no attention and produced the driest chicken, fully tooth-resistant, ever seen locally. The baked steak was to be dredged in flour, browned on the grill, ranked in pans, foiled, and baked to moist perfection. She did NOT brown it, and she did NOT foil it. Beef hockey pucks is what it was! She attempted to make gravy (There should have been adequate stock with the baked steak) from commercial beef extract, a very salty proposition. The gravy was so salty that it could not be eaten. The manager returned from West Virginia just in time to see her cooking a raw potato in the gravy, trying to absorb some of the salt. There was no help for it. Again, the melon boat was the only thing that satisfied them, and they took it home with them. We saw them not again.

**Culminating Disaster #3** – the "Piece de Resistance" and boy-o did they resist! We knew her for a total fraud by now, but the owner, a bit too tender hearted, could not bring himself to cut her loose — Until the **BROWNIES and the big industrial picnic.** Guest list, 1000 ( There's gold in them thar' mills! ) Menu: broasted chicken, potato salad, ( The manager's daughter performed heroically, doctoring the dressing to make it palatable...threw half of it out she did! ) The Fraud took the brownie production unto herself. On Tuesday and Wednesday, she violated the manufacturer's instructions ( to add ONLY water ) and put in oil and eggs, thereby converting a doughy, sticky brownie to fluffy, fragile cake. And, she did not oil and flour the baking pans, nor did she use parchment paper in them. And then, 5 pounds of Crisco® were combined with a blizzard of powdered sugar ( AND SOME WATER, I think ). With three days to set up before the picnic, **white armor plate is what it was!** Then the "artiste" in her struck, and she brought in her pastry decorating kit to put two initials ( the company's logo ) on top of every single brownie. She tinted frosting red and it bled into the white; she tinted frosting black and it hemorrhaged into the white!

Our manager blew her cool, and told the fraud that at the rate she was going, she'd be there next week. She stopped.

The picnic came. The brownies totally resisted coming out of the pan in anything but small fragments. Not a half a dozen of them were used before the whole 1,000 of them were abandoned totally. Had it not been for 1,000 back-up cookies, the wee ones would have been sorely disappointed. Three or three and a half days of totally wasted effort, and

she wasn't cheap, either!

At last, the owner acknowledged what his manager had been telling him, and told the frump that they would call her when next they needed her. She sailed out without cleaning her pastry kit. It lay about the kitchen for a month or so; no one would have touched it! Finally, we "land-filled" it.

But, sometimes when I see a backside abundant engulfing a kitchen stool, I think of her. She really tried to cook, sitting of a stool.

And all those beans in #1…another tale altogether.

# Why Don't Things Taste That Good Anymore?

*(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)*

I read devotedly, each Wednesday morning, the pronouncements of Sandy Thorn Clark, food critic extraordinaire, of the Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette; and I watch, sometimes twice a day, the "Great Chefs" programs on the Discovery Channel on TV. These acts cause me to now make two points to the reader: that I am NOT, I repeat, **NOT** a gourmet! (A lady once cut me from her list of lukewarm friends because I would not serve as a food critic of similar assignment an a fledgling Ft. Wayne magazine, not recognizing that I talk a much meaner menu than I ever eat!) In truth, I'm interested in the process, and the FLAMING EXCESSES of the so-called great chefs; but it does not mean that I could emulate them, nor am I competent to judge their efforts.

And the second point: that nothing they cook looks half as delicious as legend tells us the foods of the past were. But...were they? I think so.

Everyone's mother was, of course, a great cook. To a hungry child...to a ravening teenager...anyone is a great cook, yes? Benjamin Franklin had it right when he said, "Hunger is the best pickle (appetizer)". Ordinary foods, eaten with great appetite and in the presence of congenial companions (Families sometimes qualify, if there are not too many sisters!) become gourmet treats. And consider the last point seriously; if you can recall the finest meals of your life, weren't they some sort of celebratory occasion with someone you loved?

Oh, indeed, I can agree that ingredients in the old days were superior: the range-run chickens with the golden skin; "un-tin-ned" freshly grated nutmeg; vegetables FRESH from your own garden (and picked dead ripe); lard-based pie crusts; triple-sifted cake flours lovingly enfolded in strictly "from scratch" recipes; and time, TIME, **TIME** in a perfumed kitchen--all lent to a superior result.

I eat many meals alone now; the food doesn't entice me. I eat many "boxed", "store bought", "prepared" meals now, and they just don't taste like Mother's cooking.

I have virtually given up reading the pronouncements of the health authorities, who seem to tell me that everything I eat or like is bad for me. Too much reading of the "experts" (who in most cases can be counted on to hold diametrically opposite views in a further 10 years, anyhow!) is, in my unhumble opinion, worse for me.

And, sometimes, I watch the great chefs, thinking that if I cannot peel/pare away, grate away, boil away, or SAUTÉ away 90% of whatever I'm cooking, the rest can't be worth marooning on a large plate in a sea of strange sauce and thinking that the millennium, gustatorily speaking, has arrived.

But then, I return comfortable to the lasting image of the finest meal of my adolescence...and it wasn't my mother's, either. I bowled on the Auburn Diner Bowling team. Herman Tritch, owner of the Diner, pretended to understand the great advertising value his juvenile team had. So, whenever we won only one game in an evening--no reward. Two games, 10 cents in trade. Three games, 15 cents. And 15 cents would buy one of Herman's hamburgers..."Nature's most-nearly-perfect-food," and a bottle of pop. Herman would toast the bun on the grill, cook the hamburger perfectly (without benefit of McDonald's Instruction School), top it with a single perfect slice of onion, and allow us the use of the house's home-made horseradish mustard! The gods did not eat any better than that! (In Mother's restaurant hamburgers were pan fried, and simply could not compete with Herman's grill.) Of course, Herman's hamburger was eaten with Goldie and Jason and other team members...no small part of the mystique of the occasion.

(Herman, Jason, and Goldie have all gone to meet their Maker. It's worth my trudging onward just to keep the memory of those hamburgers alive.)

And yes, I do remember some...many....a myriad of good things from my mother's kitchen and restaurant and I am not alone there. One gentleman came in afternoons at four for warm apple pie and milk, knowing that Mother would have put the pies in the oven just before leaving for home and her afternoon nap. The kindly hardware owners from next door, for years after Mother gave up the restaurant, were abundant in their gratitude whenever Mother fashioned a sugar cream pie for them. The telegraph operator came on Saturday night about every 5 or 6 weeks for fried chicken livers. The Sunday dinner crowds ate her superb baking powder biscuits for 9 wonderful years, as well as the host of home-made.....TRULY HOME-MADE...pies...the butterscotch, the pumpkin, and the fabulous mincemeat. And, I came to know that there is no finer craftsman than a good home cook.

# Maude Gatten's Meatloaf

Mama worked for Maude Gatten, the cook in the St. Joe Hotel kitchen, for a brief period between quitting school (1912) and getting married (1914). The recipe I still find delectable is the souvenir of that experience.

**Maude Gatten's Meatloaf**

2 ¾ pound good hamburger
¼ pound good bulk sausage (NOT "hot", not "Italian"…just good plain sausage)
2 eggs beaten
1 slice stale bread, soaked thoroughly in warm water squeezed out
chopped onion to taste
chopped sweet bell pepper to taste
salt heartily
pepper generously

Allow the meat to come to room temperature. Mix in the eggs, and the remaining ingredients. Form into a loaf in a covered roasting pan, and pour a cup of water about it. Bake in a 350° oven for a full hour. Allow to rest briefly, then move to a serving dish and allow it to air for 15 to 20 minutes. (That is when it will take on the beautiful brown surface color).

HLS variations: I also add oregano, garlic powder (generously), Worcestershire sauce and / or Tabasco ® sauce (as the mood strikes me), and sometimes cover the surface with canned hot-dog chili sauce, or whole tomato slices. Serve with antacid tablets! Makes great cold sandwiches…and…when was the last time you had meatloaf gravy? Take a wire whisk and whisk the daylights out of the pan drippings. Thicken as you would another gravy. It will be a "flecked" gravy, but tasty.

# SIDE ORDERS

# The Lady Makes A Salad

It was pretty obviously France's loss, and America's gain when a later-day acquaintance of mine married a French bride and brought her to Indiana and environs. With her came her Gaelic food history, never more appealingly revealed than in the celebrated "Rina's Salad".

The ingredients? Your own favorite choice of LEAF LETTUCES, PROPERLY PREPARED. The lettuce must be well inspected, and carefully washed. Then, it must be dried. If you have a salad spinner, fine. If not, take a large bath towel, nestle the lettuce in it, and send your best baseball pitcher outdoors to "whip" the water out of it. But, DRY IT MUST BE!

The dressing? Add all ingredients in the dressing at the same time. Allow the dressing to marinate for at least half an hour. Then, just before serving, apply the dressing to the dry, crisp lettuces and toss lightly. A salty dressing, but it is pure ambrosia. When the guests want a second serving of salad (and they will, they will!), apply dressing to the next batch of lettuce. And, if you have any leftovers of the salad, it will be surprising. (I have seen it eaten wilted by an avid saladholic, but it's better crisp and fresh!)

**The Dressing:**

6 Green onions, sliced 1" diagonally
4 Tbls. good salad oil, *Extra Virgin olive oil is nearly good enough*
2 Tbls. red wine vinegar
Salt & Pepper to taste (and I like it rather salty)

add to:

2 bunches leaf lettuce (For B. Bartels, quadruple!)

# A Pair of Winners From Mother Walters

In other works by this author, tribute has been paid to Silas Teddy Walters and his remarkable clan…a father and uncle who served in the Civil War, and with Ted himself, represented a span of 151 years…and good cooks, of course. Not the least of these was "Aunt Mildred", Ted's sister-in-law. The children of Melvin & Mildred Walters were an advertisement both of their mother's fine cooking and an appealing, placid temperament; and while I cannot demonstrate that temperament on paper, I can give you a couple of recipes that fueled her sturdy offspring.

First, the charming "County Line Cheese" ® Salad, as originally written down by Mildred herself:

**County Line Cheese Salad**

1 large can sliced pineapple
15¢ worth of marshmallows
20¢ worth of County Line Cheese, cut up
1 cup whipping cream

**The Dressing**
2 Tbls. Vinegar, then fill cup with enough water to make ½ cup
1 cup sugar
1Tbls. Flour
2 eggs
Lump of butter

Cook these ingredients for the dressing until thickened. Then cool and pour over mixture. Add whipped cream and mix well

Kind of "pinch 'n dabby"? Well, yes. You'd get SUCH a look from a grocer today trying to buy just 20¢ worth of cheese like that…and for that matter, you'd not find anything like the original County Line Cheese ®, which has gone the way of Merger, Buy-out, Consolidation, and Blah!

In the hands of a daughter-in-law (also suspected of being a fine cook), the ingredients list has been refined just a bit:

1 20 oz. Can chunk pineapple, drained
10 ½ oz. Pkg. miniature marshmallows
½ lb. good Colby cheese (County Line, if you still have faith), cut in small cubes
1 cup whipping cream, beaten, sweetened, and flavored

The Dressing? Essentially the same directions, save that the eggs are to be beaten and it is 2 Tbls. of butter. When you reach the whipping cream, add 2 Tbls. of sugar and ½ tsp. of vanilla while whipping and then fold gently through the ingredients and cooled dressing.

It was / is such a dessert as to have people jockeying for position at the dessert table when this confection was unveiled!

**Mom Walter's Sugar Cookies**

The County Line Cheese Salad recipe was likely reserved for special occasions. This sugar cookie recipe was the fodder of which children...and lovely childhood memories are built. When turned out by the dozens, weekly, their ¾" thickness and 4" diameter, accompanied by a glass of milk or hot cup of tea, made an unbeatable snack for anyone...anytime of day.

**Ingredients:**

2 cups white sugar
1 cup lard
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. grated nutmeg
1 tsp. vanilla
4-5 cups flour

Mix the ingredients in the order presented. Add enough more flour to be able to roll out on a cookie board. Cut out in cookie shapes, place on a greased cookie sheet, sprinkle with white sugar, and bake for 12 minutes in a 375° oven.
Then stand by for your own group of hunger marchers!

The author's addenda: I taught four of the children who were raised on such sound cooking. I personally doubt that any but the most resolute of mothers could have stopped most of that clan at ONE cookie apiece!

And…I shall not go by these recipes without thanking Mrs. Pat Leffler of Phoenix, AZ, (a niece of Melvin Walters) and Mrs. Ruth Walters, daughter-in-law of Mildred, for their generosity in dusting off these delightful recipes.

# A Pair of Salads

I realize that if you read the Table of Contents of this book you'll notice that this tome is a little "heavy" on the dessert side. So here's my salute to good nutrition two very tasty salads. One comes courtesy of my friend Coleen DeCamp and the other is from her mother, Irene McLaughlin. --BB

**Tri-Bean Salad**

**Dressing:**
1 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ cups white vinegar
1 cup salad oil
2 tsps. Salt
2 Tbls. Italian salad dressing
**Salad:**
3 cans whole green beans (drained)
2 cans wax beans (drained)
2 cans red kidney beans (drained)
1 onion large (chopped coarsely)
1 green pepper (chopped coarsely)

Pour dressing over beans & gently mix. Chill & serve.

**Cranberry Salad**

2 packages Raspberry Jello®
3 cups hot water
*Mix Jello® and water*
1 pound cranberries (chopped)
2 cups sugar
1 cup diced celery
1 orange (ground)
1 cup walnuts (chopped)

Mix all ingredients and chill

# The Delectable Frozen Fruit Dessert

*(As presented by B. Stackhouse)*

My mother rarely conceded anyone else's skill in cooking, but among her recipes were the following two, indicating a very high level of approval of her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter, "Bodey" Schwartz-Stackhouse and Mary Ann Stackhouse-Houser. First, the dessert:

**Frozen Fruit Dessert**

#2 can Mandarin orange segments
Small can crushed pineapple
#2 can peach sections, cut into 1" chunks
#2 can apricot halves
#2 can pitted black cherries

¾ cup powdered sugar
8 oz. Cream cheese
9 oz. pkg. (tub?) Cool Whip ®

Drain the fruit well, combine the last three ingredients, and then fold into the fruit. Fold gently, then freeze. Remove from freezer about 30 minutes before serving. (Very effective if frozen in a can that has had top and bottom removed, creating a circular "log").

## *The M. A. Houser Barbecue Recipe*

Mama's barbecue was largely uninspired...it simply was not a country recipe, (and therefore learned after coming into contact with the commercial cooking world). I

remember it as being somewhat "zip-less", especially as compared to the present day romance with the Habanero pepper. But...but...she had a granddaughter, exiled by Fate to one of the poor neighboring counties, who could and did cook in the "modern idiom". There are a splendid lot of things that this girl can whip up (as witnessed by the current dieting state of her spouse), but we shepherd our resources and offer just this one:

**Barbecue**

½ cup chopped onion
2 Tbls. cooking fat
½ tsp. salt
a dash black pepper
sm. dash cayenne pepper
2 Tbls. brown sugar
1 ½ cups catsup
2 Tbls. vinegar
¼ cup lemon juice
1 Tbls. Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbls. prepared mustard
¼ tsp. oregano

Mix all ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Then add

2 lb. ground beef, browned (or "pulled" pork / chicken / turkey)

Simmer together for a few minutes, and serve on sandwich buns.

# Martha's Magic

To a generation of Auburnites, raised to expect that Martha Falka was immortal and that her delectable caramel corn would go on forever, her recent death may have produced more than the sadness felt at the passing of a warm and colorful character in town life. What of her expertise...must it, like her hearty cackle, be buried with her? Well, hardly!

For...if Martha could learn those recipes from the cherished Bernice Wible (and she did!) – and if Doc Trausch inherited the recipes along with the popcorn stand – then they can also be passed on to you (and with Doc's acquiescence, they are going to be!) In fact, Doc willingly resurrects not only the caramel corn recipe, but also tells us how the celebrated "oil-boiled" peanuts were prepared.

**Martha's Caramel Corn**

4 cups of popcorn, popped with salt (will fill most of a five gallon lard can)

3 lb. Brown sugar (2 light, 1 dark)

½ lb. butter (US government surplus worked just fine!)

1 ½ cups light Karo® syrup

2 cups water

**ABSOLUTELY NO SODA**

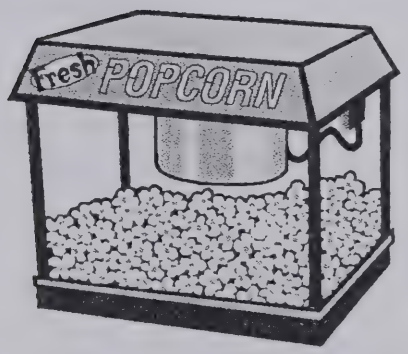
In a large copper cauldron (preferably), cook all but the popcorn until it reaches the "hard ball" stage. Remove from heat and add popcorn, Stirring with a wooden paddle until the corn is fully coated. Decant it all on a large marble slab while still hot and plastic; press flat with your aluminum popcorn scoop. When it has cooled completely, break it up by banging with the scoop, bag it in plastic (or back into the 5 gallon can with a TIGHT LID) and enjoy. Compare it with the typical "fairground" caramel corn. They should hang their heads in shame!

**Oil-Boiled Peanuts**

4 lb. uncooked redskin peanuts

5lb. popping compound, preferably not coconut oil based

Place in a slow cooker and simmer for 3 hours. Dip out on shallow tray to drain, and salt to taste.



# Rose Buttermore's Pecan Brittle

For such a wee shred of a woman, there was much to like about Rose Buttermore. The following recipe was the happy bonus for a casual act of kindness I was able to do for Rose a couple of summers back. (I had stumbled on an orchard with stunning Canadian Pride peaches. I bought a lot of them to repay acts of kindness done me by various ladies. When delivering some to Cousin Freida Dailey, Rose came out of her apartment to tell me that my cousin wasn't at home. An amiable chat led to me presenting Rose with some of the beautiful fruit, and a few days later, Rose reciprocated the gift with the finest confection I may every have eaten, pecan brittle. Rose had shared the recipe with friends, and following Rose's recent demise, one of them passed it on to me. And…I to you….)

**Rose Buttermore's Pecan Brittle**

1 cup Karo white syrup

2 cups granulated sugar

¼ cup boiling water

2 tbs. Butter

1 cup pecans

2 tsp. baking soda

Combine the syrup, sugar, and water and cook until it reaches "hard ball" stage, cracks or spins in cold water. Then, add the pecans and the butter, and cook onward to a golden brown (300°). Add the baking soda, stir, and pour into two shallow, buttered pans. When it is barely cool enough to handle, STRETCH on the pan as you might taffy, and let harden. The result will be gauze of brittle between clumps of pecans. Shatter, Ziplock, and stand by for the compliments.

# Quince Honey

*(Reprinted from ...On Further Reflection)*

As a child, I knew (as did most boys of my generation) where the best (or most accessible) fruit trees grew. I was never aware of the overt exchange of the information, one child to another, but none the less, we somehow came to know where the early transparent apples could be found, and where the ox-heart cherry tree was. Both of these were, for a fact, in the backyard of a genial neighbor, Bill Scott of W. 11th Street. But, never...never did any of us know...or even care to know...the location of any quince trees. The reason? You simply could not / did not eat a quince in hand. They were very hard, even when fully ripe; they were generally ugly, being given to strange discolorations, warts, and bumps on their banana-yellow surface; and, they were stunningly astringent. You might well have called them alum fruit!

But, in the hands of a very few jam and jelly makers, there could occur a conversion from the ridiculous to the sublime, literally. The end product, passed through such gifted hands, was quince honey. Quince honey was that sort of a perplexing product as to be simple to describe and difficult to make. It required extraordinary attention while cooking. It did!

The recipe was simple enough: just sugar, water, grated quince, and lemon juice...and slavish dedication. My mother, a gifted cook, infused it with rather more drama than necessary when she insisted that the quinces must be grated by hand--no food processor would have been allowed. But if she over exaggerated there, she was on the mark when she demanded total concentration while it cooked. From the moment it was introduced to heat, one must stir constantly. It seemed ridiculous to me, at first; but it had such a great amount of sugar compared to the water that it would burn remarkably easily. So, stir over the heat you must. And, additionally, you knew when this jam of the gods was finished by its color, and you must watch every moment for it to reach just that stage. It would begin cooking as a lemon-yellow or straw-yellow mix. As it reached boiling, gradually the grated quince would almost magically seem to disappear--they became nearly transparent in the sickening syrup. Nearing the end of cooking time, the syrup assumed much of the consistency of a good popcorn glaze, while the whole affair began to subtly shift from lemon to honey to delicate rose to a translucent pink. Then, quickly from the heat and into smallish jam glasses. As hard as the quinces were to grate, and as long as the watching and stirring had taken, you would <u>not</u> have been tempted to give it away in very large quantities, anyhow. For that matter, I never saw my mother make more than 4 or 5 glasses of it in a batch. It was some precious!

How precious? My mother and Mayor Jerry Oren traded gourmet items; His morel mushrooms for her quince honey.

There were added results of this preparation. No matter how carefully you had tried to contain everything, there was a tendency of everything in the kitchen to seem sticky after a batch. A meticulous, dear friend of my sisters tried the recipe out this fall. She reported with delight on the success of the recipe she had used, and with woe on the condition of her previously spotless kitchen.

But then, on a given morning, you could experience heaven on your taste buds: toast and quince honey. And if you wished to admit someone to the rarest plateau of friendship, you gave them a small glass of the honey.

I knew of few other uses for the paradoxical quince. Oh, on even more rare occasions, Mother made a sort of conserve of quince very thinly sliced quinces and hard winter pears--no Bartletts for this please. In this mixture, both the tough quince slices and the tough pear slices eventually came to an al dente consistency. I never quite understood whether you were to put it on your toast, as the world's toughest marmalade; or just eat it as a hypersweet sauce.

The other use: not really much recommended. For, it came to pass on one Halloween that Mother, who had been giving the little extortioners apples for their boodle bags, ran out of apples. She turned in her exasperation, to an overabundance of quinces and dropped these into their bags. One can well imagine the carnage as the rock-hard quince, dropped from 2 feet above, hit the tender cookies. A dear old aunt, visiting us that year, remarked to her, "Hazel, when those children find out what you've given them, they're going to throw them right through your windows!" Well, they never did...and they never will, I guess.

# Ambrosia Revisited -
# *-Quince Honey*

Hedy Lamarr ( Delilah ), the Austrian bon-bon, slithers about a couch in a most suggestive manner, watching the number the Philistines are doing on Victor Mature ( Samson ). ( Old Movie! ) Among other signs of her decadence, she is eating some sort of gooey confection from a golden spoon. Well, rejoice Trivia Lovers! I know what it was...it was a Biblical version of quince honey! Nothing else would have clung to the spoon in such a provocative fashion ( and Samson would have brought down the temple, not in anger at Philistia in general, of the false god, Dagon, in particular...Oh no! Just plain frustration that Delilah did not share the quince honey with him! ) Obviously true, if you have ever tasted quince honey...

Marauding through Mother's old cookbooks, I came across her instructions, written in much the same hand, I fancy, of that little message from the "Sponsor" that Daniel read from the walls of the palace in Babylon. Deviate a whisker, and it's "mene, mene" to you too, baby!

The recipe begins "quinces are very funny." ( Especially if you drop them in a Halloween "boodle-bag" from about 3'. They'll do a number on every cookie in the bag! ) They are for a fact, lemon-y yellow, stone-hard, puckery beyond belief, slightly fuzzy, and pretty hard to find anymore. But, in the hands of a very patient cook, nothing...**nothing...NOTHING** can be so rewarding!

To begin then: "Quinces should be grated for honey. About 3 medium size grated, add 3 cups of sugar and ¾ cup of water. Put over heat, only letting them simmer, stirring often until a drop don't want to come off the spoon. If you cook overdone, they will get thick. If you cook too fast, they will not be pink. Quinces pulverized will only make marmalade, not honey."

Quince jelly? Take centers and peelings, let simmer for about 2 hours [ Until you have 2 cups of liquid remaining - HLS ]. Add 1 cup of sugar, continue to simmer, and watch carefully. Will produce fine jelly, 1 glass.

The son's commentary: This honey…or even the weaker jelly…is fit for no one of lesser stature than Mother Theresa. It is exacting, slow, tedious…whatever…to make, and it deserves some pretty finicky giving. But on warm toast. you'll know why Vic flexed his pecs!

Those same quinces, peeled and sliced very thin, can be quietly simmered with hard winter pear slices, sugar, and lemon juice to make a delectable "tough marmalade". *(Also try a few thin lemon slices cooked in this marmalade – delectable).* You may note with some interest that the quince tends to turn nearly transparent when simmered and your final quince honey will be a honey-pink color with a pebbly texture. And, my, is it good!

And, yes…my Mother DID drop quinces in Halloween sacks, once!

# FOR THE HEARTY APPETITE!

# Frumenty, That Is!
## *(or Frumity, Fermenty, and Fermity)*

In preparing this article, I relied on an adhesive memory and sought an article from a 1950's Scientific American, an article charmingly titled "The Ethnogastronomy of the First Thanksgiving" (the peculiar eating habits of the Pilgrims). Wiped out is what I got, despite heroic efforts by my local library to locate the article through their "lending" network.

What had I hoped to gain? 1. A specific menu for the first Harvest Home Festival (The Pilgrims would NOT have celebrated a religious holiday thusly, even though they were properly grateful to Divine Providence for their survival. Instead, they took part in a typical English autumnal village event that celebrated a good harvest.) 2. Commentary on the dietetic demands of the vigorous Pilgrim farm life. And, 3. A recipe for one particular dish they favored, "frumenty".

As to the menu, it relied heavily on game, and the village huntsmen had been so successful with deer and turkey that three or four of them brought back enough meat for both Pilgrims and Indian guests to feast for two or three days...and they could FEAST!

That Pilgrim diet? Its demands were not much different that those of my grandfathers, who farmed by substantially the same methods,though removed by nearly 300 years from their age. Six thousand calories were required for a grown man. For the Pilgrims, that meant at least 1 ½ lb. of meal, made up into gruel, mush, or breads; it required ½ pound of butter or cheese, DAILY. Other vegetables and fruits figured in, as they were available, but grain was the basis. The author raised the speculation that the plenteous seafood would have helped some, and tantalized us with the spectacle of unlimited lobster. "Not so, " was his conclusion, for 1. The Pilgrim regarded lobster as a trash food, fit for pigs only! And, 2. Lobster, of itself, is a poor source of calories. One would have to tackle some 60 pounds of lobster in the shell to gain the 6000 calories. It is definitely the drawn butter that does the number on our diets!

But the frumenty? There is scant material on frumenty, other that the original article. Modern encyclopedias do not abound with information, but they do reveal that it could be made with milk as well as simply water. And what was it? Ancient Biblical soul

food is what it was. It is described as a nearly perfect food, and it is mentioned in the Bible in the reverent tone. For you to make it, take two pounds of red wheat and boil it for 10 minutes in a quart of water. Then, putting a close fitting lid on the pan, place overnight in an oven that has at least a pilot light burning. In the morning, the result will be a swollen mass of wheat, much of it un-hulled, in a jelly. That product could be used for a breakfast food (add honey and dried fruits if you wanted a Biblical dish) We might serve it with butter, brown sugar, and half-and-half (Well, I would have, until recently!). Or, one might sweeten it and lace it with dried currants or raisins and bake it as a pudding. As the author observed, "It had soul!"

But have I EVER seen it done? Yes, indeedy. One of my students, having heard this material in my American Literature Class, tried it out at home and brought me a sample in a pint jar. I wasn't swept away by it, immediately; but as I got a bit hungrier during an after-school activity, I found that it didn't go down too badly. Oh, it's not going to drive Battle Creek to the wall, but in Middle Eastern deserts, it probably would go down pretty well. Frumenty, that is!.

# Of Herculean Proportion

At the time of my paternal grandfather's birth (1865), there had been virtually no change from the Pilgrim caloric demand (approximately 6,000 calories a day, HEAVILY relying on fats), at least among the farming population, we were still HEARTY eaters. Grandfather's figure reflected his occupation and diet – about 5'9" and 250 pounds...and an early death by "apoplexy". Two of his sons also chose to farm, also reflected diet and occupation, but one escaped to his late 70's, while the other perished of diabetes, perhaps accelerated by diet, but certainly not primarily caused by it.

Odd material for a cookbook? Not really, for the vigor of their lifestyles commanded their wives to prepare meals that were, by the standards of 1995, tremendous. And if the ordinary, everyday meal was so impressive, then consider the THRESHERS' DINNER.

If an ordinary farm breakfast required fried potatoes, eggs, two or three breakfast meats, breads, coffee and even pie (after all, he HAD been doing his chores since 5 AM!); if dinner (Farmers did not eat "lunch") demanded more meats, plenty of home-grown and home-prepared vegetables, always mashed potatoes and gravy, beverages, and pies or other desserts; and supper somewhat repeated the demands of dinner (if in more modest proportions)...Then what, What were the proportions of the Threshers' Dinner? They were "English-Hunt-Breakfast" or "Family-Reunion-Potluck" in size. "Ready and plenty and piping hot," as Benet said in "John Brown's Body".

Only once was I privileged to attend such a threshers' meal; and as a child, I was forced to wait until the threshers should have filled themselves. Then the table was reset and hangers on...including the several ladies who assisted the farm wife...could have at it.

Perhaps the threshers' meal, with its monumental demands, came only that once a year; but the farmwife had a weekly regimen that might give one pause for thought. There were, of course the three very-square meals a day. Added to that were the weekly demand for breads—ten, fifteen, or twenty loaves—pies (dessert for every meal in several varieties)—and special labors of love (cookies for the children, up to 75 years of age;

cakes for company); and special baking for compassion(the ill, the needy); and Church socials; and, and, and...And washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday...and gardening and typical housework.

The loss of the Mother, traumatic ever, was simply catastrophic on a farm...read the final chapter of the farm memoir, "The Land Remembers", and be devastated across a gulf of 90 years.

And...the mending, the sewing, the quilting.....Why it sounds positively Amish.

But, surely she had some help with it all? Well, homegrown help would have been most common...That is, when the children she had "birthed" herself grew sufficiently large. But until then, add child-care to her list of labors. It is even possible that she relished splitting her own stove wood and tending her own garden. They would have taken her out-of-doors for a moment at least. And she likely took a satisfaction in enriching her garden with potash (wood ashes); in salting her asparagus bed (the brine from the ice cream freezer), and possibly even making her own lye soap (the wood ashes again, and animal fats). Of course, the latter raises the additional duties associated with butchering and meat preservation, as well as the drying and canning of garden produce. Making all other things possible, just how well do you think a Jane Fonda exercise tape would have sold to that lady?

Viewing all of the forgoing, the demands of rural life on the domestic skills of the farmwife were massive. A sound marriage should have had a strain of practicality: Did he/she come of a family that produced lots of healthy children? Was her father an acknowledged good farmer? Was her mother a known good housekeeper and cook? Would they be adequately "dowered" to found a household? But, it must also be said (as the author Jessamyn West had her calm Quaker minister, Eliza, tell her daughter in "The Friendly Persuasion", that "Next to a kindly heart, it's good if he's handsome." Amid all those qualifications, they could hope for some romantic love, also.

And...a trove of recipes, passed down from mother to daughter (and now sometimes maddeningly incomplete for lack of such details as specific measurements, temperatures, and times). But, daughter having stood by her mother in the kitchen, would have developed a subliminal knowledge of cooking principles...a real "feel" for the art. I think great cooks still develop it; but since it can't be quantified in proper scientific manner, we just don't acknowledge it.

# Soup's On!!!

And...at the most improbable moments...you get inspirations!
Recovering recently from a visit by all 12 tribes of the Parishes, it suddenly struck me that the world...I say, T*H*E*W*O*R*L*D, might like to know the bait used to assemble that illustrious clan. It was Ernestine Parish's modest vegetable soup recipe. (Of course! Everyone knows a simple recipe for veggie brew! But...do you know a dependable recipe that will serve 36, and have a winter's supply left for the house-host?) Read on, hungry reader.

First, the assembly of the ingredients. Keep a sharp eye out for those beef sales in early fall...20 pounds of boneless chuck roast are not a mere pittance. Bargains, ho! Likewise, 25-30 pounds of cabbage rewards careful bargain hunting. Beef marrow bones? Not free, and you need at least 15 pounds of them. So assemble:

20 pounds boneless chuck roasts, roasted in a slow oven until fork tender, and then SHREDDED. *Add water if needed.*
15+ pounds marrow bones, roasted at 250° for 5 hours (to a deeeeep brown cast), and then simmered another 4 hours (at least) to produce a broth you'd rather NOT gaze upon. (It will underpin a marvelous soup, but it looks and tastes yucky at this stage.) *About 3-4 gallons*
20 pounds (or even more) of firm cabbage, sliced/shaved with a fine kitchen knife. A slaw cutter would be déclassé.
10 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into ½" - ¾" cubes. (I do not recommend cutting a finger at the same time...as I did this year. Pink potatoes ARE distinctive, but you feel rather dumb [and your guests look rather uneasy when you explain the bandage on your finger while they are probing a bowl of deep red soup!])
6 pounds carrots, peeled and cut into ¼" slices.
2 stalks celery, de-dirted, de-sanded, and cut into ¼" slices.
2 immense, I say, IMMENSE onions, medium diced.
4 #10 cans whole tomatoes, squoooshed (Okay, purists can cut them with a knife, but where's the fun of that?)

Salt, pepper, red pepper flakes to taste.
2 12 ounce packages frozen corn...added solely for the cosmetic appeal.

*In Reserve*
46 ounce cans of tomato juice. The ingredients given above will produce a soup as thick as the Okefenokee, but if you wish to "extend" the soup (in case another 36 guests show up), you can easily add the juice.

**Directions:**
Add everything last! (Well, it seems that way, sometimes!) Begin with your marrow broth, from which you have removed any discernible bits of marrow [It will float to the surface.] Divide it equally between two 20 quart enamel canners or MASSIVE soup kettles. Put ½ of the shredded beef in each kettle. (Oh yes...you did turn the burners on, didn't you?) Add the carrots, onions, celery and the tomatoes and raise it to a slow simmer...a slow 4-6 hour simmer all told. After an hour add the 20 pounds of shredded cabbage then after another 1-2 hours of simmering, you can add your potatoes and after another ½ hour, the corn. A correctly made soup will have identifiable vegetables in it. Overcooked, it will be a tasty vegetable gruel!

As the soup "develops", it will take on a lovely, Rockefeller-rich, red hue with beef and marrow fat glazing on the surface. Taste it frequently...you've earned it!

Avoid stainless steel kettles...they scorch rather too easily. If you have heat diffusers, use them on your burners. I'm sure that if you have added up costs, you know that you are $75.00 for ingredients alone, not to mention value of labor. What a dreadful pity to burn the soup, at this...or any price!

When you are done, go to bed (for you know that this had to be done the night BEFORE!) The soup will not cool off enough to get into any trouble, and you will fire it up again the next morning. You have a daughter who will eat soup for breakfast.

How to serve? Cozen a quaint little old breadmaker from Florence, KY into baking 13 loaves of homemade. Hie thyself to Hilger's Market in Columbia City to get 4 pints of black raspberry, 3 pints of cherry, and a few pints of other jams to put on that bread. Butter, of course! Have your little old breadbaker also make some of her GENUINE coffee. Assemble yahoo-many soup bowls and spoons, much paper toweling (West 7th Street napery), lots of coffee cups and mugs, and a fridge full of carbonateds and ice cubes. And, **TURN THEM LOOSE.**

Acceptance? They've been coming back for years. Some of the wretches may be suspected of an inverted gratitude...offering my name to storm door salesmen in the Industrial Tent at the Fair. But, they even do the dishes.

What, really, is in it for me? True, it was not cheap; but bachelors like the patter of little feet around the house once in a while, and this year, there were 76 strange little feet pattering—36 humans and one lovable little black doggie! I got my fridge cleaned out of such containments as 6 quarts of elderberries. I ended up with the surplus shaved cabbage, and it was a benison, for:

I sweated down 2 large handgrasps of shredded cabbage with 1 tsp. of olive oil, shot it with soy sauce, added a little vinegar and artificial sweetener, and had a VERY palatable NEW cabbage dish for me...and very low cal! I shall mix red wine vinegar, water, sweetener, celery salt, celery seed, pepper, a touch of olive oil, green pepper, chopped onion, and cabbage together for a vinegar slaw...again rather low cal!

But...but...most of all...for a while, GOOD FRIENDS and GOOD FOOD. (I send out eccentric invitations each year. Next year, maybe one to Heaven, so that HE can see, for one moment, what a Paradise could be!) (Distant rumble of thunder, flash of lightning—off stage left.)

DELICIOUS AFTERTHOUGHT: I discovered, while doing dishes yet the next day, that someone had left 5" of soup in the bottom of the kettle. That's enough to fill some cold, empty spots in the tummy on cold winter evenings! And, while stowing the bread after the Southern contingent arrived, two loaves inadvertently were placed in my underwear drawer under the black silk shorts (blush)! I haven't time just now to investigate, but my nephew has bravely volunteered to help dispose of the bread, me being on an inhumane 1000 calorie a day diet...theoretically.

| | |
|---|---|
| Forgotten items: | 4 pkg. of oyster crackers |
| | One plate of deviled eggs |
| | 5 or 6 different varieties of homemade cookies...dozens...dozens! |
| | One massive simmered-in-beer ham, a la P. E. Stackhouse II. |
| | 4-5 loaves superb "KY rye". |
| | 5 gallons Martha's Best Carmelcorn |
| and... | NOT A SINGLE ANTACID TABLET!!! |

# Ambiance
# You Can Eat

For all of the brilliance a fine cook may bring to their craft, it still won't be **that truly great** meal unless you share it with someone you like / love. I think back on meals that stand out in my memory, and the WHO was as important as the WHAT of it all.

I know, for example, that I can give you the enclosed recipe for fried bread and apple butter...I can prepare it myself, should I choose. But, it will not measure up to having it with friends that first time at the Nashville House, nor with the Robert Wilder Apple Butter festival of perhaps 20 years back. The first of these occasions had the effervescence of a trip to IU (always a pleasure for we three alumni), the electric thrill of the State basketball Final, and the added pleasure we took of each other's company. The fried chicken entree was good, but no miracle. Their version of cole slaw left something to be desired. If you, or anyone, can make a side dish of nibblets corn into gourmet fodder, hats off to you! They couldn't. But, the unending trays of fried bread, attended by butter and apple butter, had an IMPACT. On your first sitting, you would have been hard pressed NOT to gorge yourself (On a second occasion, acquaintances of ours so over-indulged that they could not lean forward to see the game from the "eagle's nest" seating at IU Assembly Hall...and they were in bloated agony for the most of the evening session!) Acerbically, I must observe that it was almost worth the tab the Nashville House put on....but NOT QUITE! (And you should see the prices now! Make you proud to be a chicken, it would!)

Robert Wilder likes a challenge, and for the third time, he proved he could duplicate a "gourmet" offering (1. The Sukiyaki dinner he and the author re-created on their return from Japan in 1969. 2. Re-creating the Tally-ho of Logansport "twice-roasted" prime rib during the mid-70's)

Invitations were sent out to a generous assemblage of his friends, that they might repair to his home and driveway of an October Saturday afternoon for the making of open

kettle apple butter. Mrs. Vivian Watts, one of this famous three, volunteered to tackle the fried bread. She of the fair complexion and lilting laugh mixed and raised and cut and rolled and fried and fried and fried. Inasmuch as you can simply inhale the first half dozen "rolls", she became far more familiar with her fry-pan that afternoon that anyone has need to be! They just wouldn't quit coming, and she couldn't quit cooking unit supplies were exhausted...and Vivian was exhausted!

In the driveway before the garage, Robert had constructed a "tripod" (or was it a tetrapod) to support the authentic, antique copper kettle....capacity about 30-35 gallons. He had scoured the kettle interior until it was a red-gold gleam. He had secured an apple butter paddle, complete with the corn shuck wrapping on the perforated paddle end. An enthusiastic fire had been built, and would be faithfully maintained, for the many hours the mixture would cook. Everyone would eventually came to share the wood smoke smell on their clothes. It was just a part of the ambiance, along with singed shins and seared hands for these continuously close to the fire. On hand were gallons of cider, pounds of butter, bushels of apples (awaiting paring and coring by the many helping hands", and lovely, arcane spices.

The roaring fire presently sent the cider off to a rolling boil, into which would presently be poured peck after peck of peeled apples. At first, they surprise you, since they were white and chunky. Given the time and heat, they lost their integrity, began to round on the edges, and in two hours or so, had turned to a hot, syrupy slush. You may check the recipe to see it, and how much, sugar went into the recipe. Some prefer it without, you know.

Due to the increasing concentration of sugars, the mixture boiled and foamed up alarmingly at times. Then it was that an entire pound of butter would be slipped into the kettle. I suppose the butterfat destroyed the surface tension of the bubbles, or something, and calmed it all down a bit. Well, it didn't hurt the taste any, either. When the spices—the cloves and cinnamon particularly, were mixed in, they would have momentarily alarmed the onlookers. But, considering the great quantity of the product...all that cider...all those apples...all that butter...it all came out rather nicely.

The hours of slow cooking went by. The children played about the yard and fascinating grounds. Conversation ebbed and flowed. Faces were flushed with the heat of the fire. An then, after much speculation, the kettle was lifted off the fire, CAREFULLY, **CAREFULLY**. The guests produced their modest cans and jars for their "share" of the ambrosia. The "fried bread and butter brigade" went to work, swiping clean the sides of the kettle.

Carefully, **carefully!** If you consider how much damage you can do with a single spilled cup of coffee...then consider the quantum leap of 5-10 **GALLONS** of more than 212° apple butter, spilled in your direction! No amateurs here, please...and no one with a "trick" knee either!

Now, then suppose you wanted to re-create it all. Well below are a pair of recipes that contain everything but the ambiance. Don't attempt these recipes unless you have plenty of time to invest, and not a little money either!

And, oh yes! Don't invite me either. I've already seen it as good as it gets!

The recipe will be given as I received it, but I have also then divided it in half, in one fifth, and in one tenth. And, immediately after first encountering this recipe, I was placed on a 1,000 calorie-per-day diet by my surgeon. He may have saved my life...certainly my figure!

**Clayton Baker Family (Amish Quantity) Apple Butter**

| | 2 x 2.5 | 1 x 2.5 | 1 x 1 | 1 x .5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Yield** | 140 quarts | 70 quarts | 28 quarts | 14 quarts |
| **Apple Cider** | 50 gallons | 25 gallons | 10 gallons | 5 gallons |
| **Apples (pared, cored & chopped)** | 11.2 bushels (40 gallons) | 5.6 bushels (20 gallons) | 2.4 bushels (8 gallons) | 1.2 bushels (4 gallons) |
| **Sugar** | 100 pounds | 50 pounds | 20 pounds | 10 pounds |
| **Cinnamon** | 15 ounces | 7.5 ounces | 3 ounces | 1.5 ounces |
| **Ground Cloves** | 8 3/4 ounces | 4 3/8 ounces | 1 3/4 ounces | 7/8 ounces |
| **Butter** | 4-5 pounds | 2-3 pounds | 1 pound | 1 pound |

(The butter is a calming agent, if and when the kettles boil too high. How much you use depends on how foamy your mixture becomes. It cannot hurt the flavor in such a quantity.)

Equipment: Two 35 gallon kettles, one 35 gallon kettle, and one or two cooking vessels larger than 5 gallons.

Very substantial "cranes" to suspend the kettles over the fire. The kettle, fully loaded with 70 quarts of apple butter, will weigh over 200 pounds.

One or two long handled apple butter stirring paddles, heads swaddled with clean, fresh corn shucks.

**The Fried Bread Recipe**

1 quart milk

¼ cup sugar

2 2/3 pkg. dry yeast, dissolved in warm water

½ cup lard

6 tsp. salt

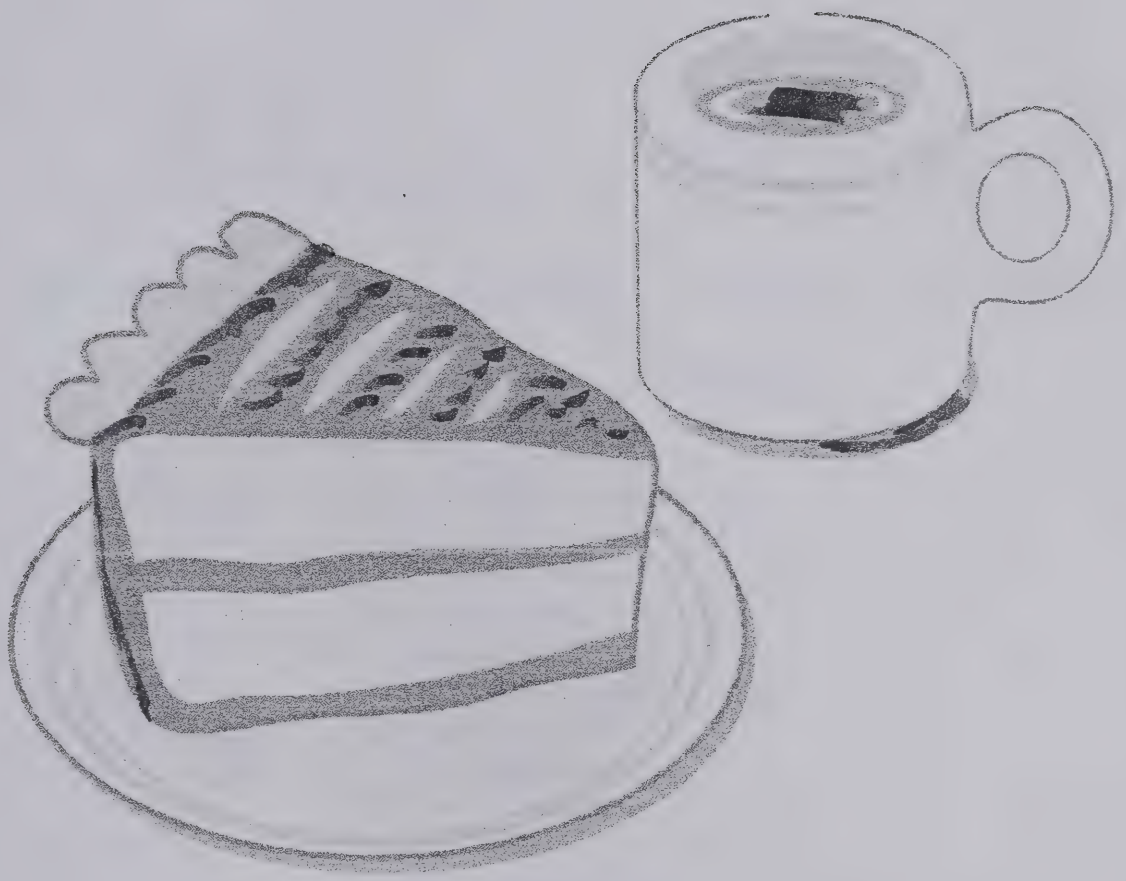
7-9 cups flour

Sufficient frying compound to deep fry 6 dozen pieces of fried bread

2 large electric frypans

Tongs or slotted spoon & draining facilities

The battle plan: add the yeast to the warm water. Then add the other ingredients and let the dough rise until doubled in bulk. Work the dough into biscuits (Mrs. Watts used 1 ½ " cut squares; Nashville House rolls them in the palms into ball shape.) Fry at slightly higher than 350°. The biscuits will have a better texture if they are not allowed to rise too high. Fry to a golden brown, turning once. Don't worry about leftovers; there won't be any! Your face will be pink with the heat of the frying and the warmth of the compliments. Enjoy...they surely will!



# DESSERTS

# Doughnuts in Rhyme

## *(in an awkward iambic trimeter rhythm)?*

One cup sugar, one cup milk
Two eggs, beaten fine as silk
Salt and nutmeg, a little will do
Of baking powder, teaspoons two
Stir the flour (?…none mentioned before!) lightly in
Roll on pie board, not too thin
Cut into diamonds, twists, and rings
Drop with care the doughy things
Into lard that briskly swells (?)
Evenly the spongy cells
Watch with care the time for turning
Fry them all just short of burning
Roll them in sugar and turn when cold
Warm them over when they are old.

Not much of a poem, but then, Shakespeare couldn't cook either!

# Spice Cake
# *"The Best"*

The author has referred, erroneously elsewhere, to this cake as "cost nothing", largely because he noted that his Mother used meat fryings, rather than butter, in the recipe. Well, at the cost of side pork for frying, butter would have been much cheaper! Sorry (not very) 'bout that!

**A Big Spice Cake**

*Use 11" x 17" pan or halve recipe*

2 eggs well-beaten

2 cups brown sugar

14 Tbls. meat fryings (or part butter, if you prefer. YES, that was 14 tablespoons!)

2 cups buttermilk

2 level tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. cinnamon

¼ tsp. allspice

¼ tsp. cloves

⅛ tsp. salt

1 cup raisins

"enough" flour to make medium stiff batter

Bake in 350° oven for 30 - 35 minutes. Test with toothpick. Don't overbake. Top with caramel icing. **Do not use any shortening with smoked meat fat in it!**

The Author's 2 cents: The original recipe came from the Dolph Family of South Bend, for whom Aunt Winnifred worked about 1905. Everything was "pinch and dab" then, hence the "enough" flour. Consider it a blessing that you got the 350°, let alone oven time and flour amounts! After all, "A good cook would just know, wouldn't they?"

# Peach Cake

Mama was a pie baker, par excellence; but if the occasion demanded, she could turn out "something special" cakes: Peach, Lady Baltimore, and her celebrated "Cost Nothing" Spice Cake. (And hey! Her Boston Creme Pies were low-cost, high demand items also!)

**Peach Cake**

1 egg
1 ¼ cup brown sugar
½ cup butter
2 ½ cups crushed peaches (home canned & ragged were fine)
1 cup raisins or nuts
2 ½ cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. cloves
5 Tbls. HOT peach juice, to be added last of all

No instructions as to sequence, save the peach juice, and…"Try in oven. Don't put too much flour in; just so it don't get waxy." Top with caramel icing. Oven Temperature & Baking Time? Mother didn't say when this recipe was first scribed off for the Betz Nursing Home Cookbook in 1987; but on being pressed, she offered: "Minutes"

True time and temperature: 350° for 35 minutes

# The Banana Cake

In every book of recipes…in every file of food favorites… there will be a recipe that has been dog-eared, soaked with ancient shortening…fragile. It must have been a dandy to have had such repeated use and battering (pun intended). Written in my mother's handwriting, this recipe fell from an unknown source into my hands just as I was rounding the turn heading for the homestretch. Enjoy.

Cream one-half cup of butter and one cup of sugar

Beat in two eggs, one at a time. Beat well.

Add 1-2/3 cups of mashed bananas and ½ cup of sour cream

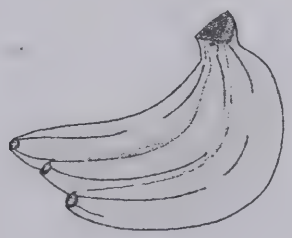
Sift together 2-1/4 cups flour, 1 tsp. Baking soda, 1 tsp. Baking powder.

Add to above mix and beat well.

Bake in two layers at 350° until golden brown

Cool 5 minutes. Put together with sea foam frosting

And for God's sake…SEND ME A PIECE!!!



# Hickory Nut Cake

Divine ingredients may, in the hands of a gifted cook, produce divine results. One of the major contributors to this work can, by exercising a little magic with a box of cake mix AND one or two divine ingredients, produce a stunning hickory nut, or coconut cake.

But, it required constant careful control to be sure of your results. Her late husband, for example, was a dedicated and superior extractor of hickory nut meats. A cake of those meats was an unalloyed treat. But, on a single occasion, her brother-in-law (a gentleman of more casual approach to his duty and perhaps weaker eyesight, also) picked out the nutmeats for her. You'd be surprised...nay, devastated...by the pieces of shell that can hide among the nutmeats! The cake made with that batch of nutmeats was a dental adventure of some peril!

But what of the recipe for "from scratch" Hickory Nut Cake (which is what I was coming to anyhow)? Well, not in the least demeaning of the efforts of my collaborator, I offer Aunt Winnifred's recipe, circa 1910.

**Hickory Nut Cake**

*Makes large cake*

1 cup of nut meats
1 scant cup butter (3/4 cup is better)
2 cups sugar
1 cup milk
4 eggs
3 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder

Cream the butter, then add the sugar. Add egg yolks. Alternately add milk and triple sifted flour. Add the nut meats. Add stiffly beaten egg whites last. Beat everything well, then bake in a 350° oven until a clean broomstraw comes out clean.

# Hickory Nut Cake –*Revisited*

Not to take anything away from my co-author or his Aunt Winnifred,I feel I must step in here and take a stand. My mother-in-law is the cook mentioned in the previous article and while there are people who would like to accuse her of a lot of things, one thing they can't accuse her of is making her Hickory Nut Cake from a mix. While I don't eat a lot of it (my taste runs more toward fruit pies) I know the real thing when I see it. So here is her recipe (an old family recipe from Highland County, West Virginia). -BB

**Hickory Nut Cake**

*Cream together:*
1 3/4 cup sugar
2/3 cup butter
*Add:*
3 eggs
*Mix well then add:*
1 cup milk
3 cups flour
3 tsps. Baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1 ½ cup nut meats

Bake in tube or bundt pan at 325° for 1 hour 15 mins.
Do Not Overbake

**Sea Foam Icing**

1 egg white (beaten stiff)
2 cups brown sugar (packed)
1 Tbl. White Karo®
½ cup water

Cook to soft ball stage: add to egg white. Beat until stiff enough to spread. If it becomes too stiff add a few drops of hot water.

# Gertrude's Favorite Cake

This recipe has appeared so often in my mother's recipes that it must have been something special. She described it as, "The favorite cake I ever knew was Gertrude's Favorite Cake" (actually it is from a Calumet Baking Powder ® , circa 1912, I believe).

**Gertrude's Favorite Cake**

3 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
2 ½ tsp. baking powder
*triple sifted together*

¾ cup butter
1 ½ cup granulated sugar
*creamed well together*

¾ cup water
4 eggs
vanilla or lemon extract

Add one egg to the butter-sugar mix, beating well. Then add a little water, an egg, and a little sifted flour and beat well. Continue adding the water, egg, and flour alternately until all are gone. Then add vanilla.

Bake in two or three pans and join together with 7 minute frosting. Oven temperature—she didn't say in two different writings of this recipe. Try 350° until a broomstraw comes out clean.

# A Missing Recipe

There is one dear soul who will have wondered, as I was gathering my portion of these recipes, "Why hasn't he asked me?" Not, I hope until she reads these lines will she know that I had not...could not have forgotten her fine cooking. And dear soul, it's not for cooking a chicken like a rubber football either!

**It's your *F*R*U*I*T*C*A*K*E*!**

Now...with most people, they can either take or leave fruitcake alone (and a large majority of those I know regard them as the gustatory equivalent of poison ivy and LEAVE THEM ALONE!) Indeed, one of our collaborators once found (in an infrequently used second fridge) a fruitcake that could clearly be identified as 20 years old. (Her husband had been bailiff for Judge Dale Myers of Fort Wayne, and as such, must have received it as a holiday gift.) Still wrapped in a protective cover, it had lain untouched for over two decades.

Palatable? As a laughable experiment, it was opened in the Holiday Season. The younger members of our group wouldn't risk it...more the fools they! I tried it, and I LIKED IT. It hadn't dried out over much during the terms of Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, or Bush. It certainly hadn't spoiled, ..not with such ingredients and protection. Fruitcake simply has ENDURANCE, Cousin Freida's will additionally have ambrosial taste.

**The ingredients:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 eggs | 1 ¼ c. granulated sugar |
| ½ c. butter | ½ c. dark Karo |
| 3 ½ c. flour | 1 ½ tsp. baking powder |
| 2/3 c. wine or pineapple juice | 1 lb. candied cherries |
| 1 lb. candied pineapple | 1 c. golden raisins |
| 1 lb. almonds | 1 lb. pecan meats |
| 2 tsp. vanilla | 2 tsp. cinnamon |
| ¼ tsp. salt | |

Line baking pans with four layers of waxed paper, set pans in shallow water bath or bottom shelf and bake for 3 ½ hours at 300 degrees. Do not give to culinary Philistines. Think of the cost.

# Mother Makes Mincemeat

*(Reprinted from Auburn Reflections)*

Not every year, but in frequent, fortunate years, Mother would make her mincemeat. It was a production calling for the skills of an army general, of a theatrical impresario, of a college cheerleader. It was, correspondingly, a moment of peril to the indolent and the modest. The results were more than a peril to the calorie conscious.

Autumn was the season, of necessity. The requisite apples would be cheap then, and in appealing variety. Fresh apple cider would be available. And, the proper mood would be upon the cook, for that is the ending of the canning season—that moment in life when the farm cook seems to think that everything animal, vegetable, and not eaten must be confined to green glass cans in the basement. Mother was a bonafide member of the group—indeed, had gone so far as to make sauerkraut on the back porch (before the EPA began to require an environmental impact statement from sauerkraut makers [Think that's quirky, do you! You haven't smelled sauerkraut in progress then!])

The affair began with the informing of her henchpersons that on a given date, she's appreciate of their help. Twice can I recall males being allowed to help, but mostly, it was women. Males might be allowed, however, to do menial chores—to bring the enamel canner up from the fruit room, to shop for ingredients (but only with the most explicit instructions, "Only puffed, seeded Muscat raisins would do. None of those suspicious seedless raisins.) The brown sugar must be medium brown, not light and not dark. We could go afield for the apples, but only if we carefully hewed to the instructions as to type.

On that given day, all ingredients assembled and Cousin Irene on hand as her favored helper, assembly on the batch began. Actual preparation had begun the night before with the boiling of eleven pounds of neck meat . We once made the product with boiled round of beef, but it wasn't quite the same. The meat was boiled in the enamel canner in about six or eight quarts of water, and then left to stand in the broth over night. In the morning, the meat was removed, and the broth saved, strained, and returned to the canner. The beef was passed through a coarse grinder and returned to the kettle to heat. To it was added the sacred ingredients—the puffed, seed Muscats, and the Zante currents, a witches brew of spices and "sauces"—tar-like apple cider jelly, apple cider, vinegar, brown sugar, cloves and cinnamon, and , remarkable, over-aged fruit from the basement, so long as it was basically firm fleshed and tart. Over-aged cherries worked just fine.

Peaches or pears did not. Plums had the flavor but perhaps not the consistency (I don't remember ever seeing them used, but their juice-yes.)

But notice please, no apples yet. They would cook-up rather quickly, and Mother held that you put in only half the quantity that you would eventually want in your mince-pie, and then put them in only soon enough before taking the brew from the heat that they would be cooked, but hopefully, yet firm. She wouldn't have used an expression like "al dente" but that's the state she hoped for in her apples.

Much tasting accompanied each subsequent addition. Perhaps a bit more of this, then that, then the other. Every batch of mincemeat came to have its own character, like vintage wines. They all start from the same ingredients, obtained the same place, but subtle differences did occur.

Finally, the apples were added, and the wine. Mother's experience with wines and brandies was limited. I got the impression that if it came in bottles and was free or cheap, it worked. If the wine was added to the hot mincemeat, none of the alcohol could have survived to be canned in. Of course, you could add the wine when you decanted the mincemeat into the pie shell, but in the heat of the oven, it had an equally short tenure. And, at the time of that baking, she preferred to add a large, firm-fleshed apple to bring the mix to the final balance.

The general, the impresario, the cheerleader? She marshaled and ordered her loving troops around imperiously getting things lined up to cook, she invested the process with the drama of a Broadway opening—no small production this; and she didn't hesitate to solicit your comment and compliments about the results. She was willing to proclaim this the best batch ever. She was a superb cook; she knew it; she expected your acknowledgment of it also.

Final step? Hot washed cans; put it in and seal it; no hot bath required—it kept as much as five years with no more than that. Use it only for special people and special occasions.

And, about two years from this October, let's have at it again.

# 20 Quart Mincemeat

A spellbinding recipe: Autumn, 1985—My mother makes her last batch of mincemeat, assisted by dear friend Beverly Snyder. It was canned, as usual, in a variety of glassing: instant coffee cans with 303 lids, pints, quarts; and some was frozen.

Christmas, 1994—My sister, Betty, bakes an excellent pie with the 1985 mincemeat, kept frozen for more than 9 years. At the risk of redundancy, I shall then begin by telling you that Mother's mincemeat had **Shelf Life!** (for I had eaten some of the canned product less than 3 months before!)

Mother's great grandchildren refused to even try the pie. More the fools, they! I had, eventually, 2/3's of it myself, and the warm memories of it's making!

**The Ingredients:**

6 pounds boiling beef, preferably neck meat
¼ pound suet
1 ½ cups cider vinegar
1 pint apple jelly (boiled down cider)
2 pounds raisins (PUFFED SEEDED MUSCAT)
2 pounds currants, ZANTE
3 pounds brown sugar
1 ½ gallons chopped apples (coarsely ground)
1 can crushed pineapple
1-2 cans old, tart, firm-fleshed canned fruit
1 quart prune plum juice, if available
2 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. cloves
Quantity wine or brandy

# Lately Discovered Jewels

Nosing through Mother's old, hand-written recipe book, I found three more recipes for pie fillings. Of them, I say in short, that even the angels do not eat this well!

**FIRST, THE PIE CRUST**

2 ¼ cups of flour
1 scant cup Crisco ®
dash of salt

Work together very well (to the large crumb stage). Add just enough cold water to stick it together. Put a floured board enough for one crust and roll out. NEVER PLAY WITH PIE DOUGH.

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**Custard / Cottage Cheese Pie**

3 eggs
(2 Tbls. Cottage cheese, OPTIONAL)
lump butter (size of a shelled walnut)
4 Tbls. Granulated sugar
*Beat the above ingredients well then add*
2 cups sweet milk

Pour into pie crust and bake at 365° until a silver knife comes out clean. Put nutmeg on top (and I think, Before baking!)

**Pumpkin Pie Recipe**

1 large cup of good pumpkin
2 egg yolks
1 slim Tbls. Flour
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/3 tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. ginger
*Mix the above ingredients well, and then add*
1 ½ cups boiling milk

Beat your egg whites and fold in. Finally, fold in 2 Tbls. Browned butter. Bake about the same as a custard pie in a 365° oven.

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**Butterscotch Pie Filling**

1 cup brown sugar
lump of butter, the size of a shelled walnut
*Put these in a skillet and brown well*
1 cup of water added, and boiled until lumps disappear
1 tsp. vanilla & a dash of salt added
*Separately, mix:*
2-3 egg yolks
1 Tbls. Flour
1+ cups of milk

Add the egg / flour / milk mixture to the hot syrup to thicken it, STIRRING CONSTANTLY. Pour all into a pre-baked crust, top with beaten egg meringue, and brown.
Let cool a bit before serving. It will ooze on you, otherwise.

---

A dear friend of Mother's recently expressed a wish for her blueberry pie recipe, but I'm sorry to add that she had no special for separate fruit pies. She did, however, follow some principles:

For apple pies, add several dabs of butter before putting a top crust on the pie.
For blueberry pies (or any other fruit i.e. elderberry that might have been a bit bland), add a teaspoonful of lemon juice to the filling.

If the pie had a penchant for being overly juicy, add a tablespoonful of flour to the mix. She did not believe in tapioca thickeners (but I do!).

**Any Fruit Pie Should Be Filled—Even Heaped Up.**

**Any Fruit Pie Must "Stew"** (and in Mother's ovens, pies frequently ran over and messed the oven up a bit. A more provident cook would have lined the oven bottom with aluminum foil. Not Mother. The air occasionally turned blue with smoke after her pie baking.)

About the only pies I remember her "glazing" with milk or sugar were the apple & peach pies.

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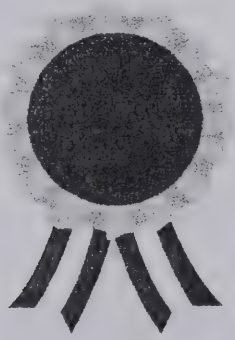
The lemon pie. Buy "Shariff's" (a Canadian brand) lemon pie filling. It is competitive with your best homemade fillings...and a lot less work. (Mother would never have recommended this, but I can and will.



# The Sugar Cream Pie

My mother's fearsome reputation as a pie-baker did not rest on any one pie; she was almost "above compare" on any pie, be it two-crust-fruit, one-crust-fresh-fruit, meringue-topped-cream-fillings, or open fillings (pumpkin, sugar cream).

Hers were not pies that were complicated, nor were they generally time-consuming in their preparation. She baked against cooking deadlines in her restaurant experiences. She generally disdained Baroque recipes, with the possible exception of two or three cakes. So, if one had to pick a representative pie "recipe", I suppose that her Old Fashioned Sugar Cream would best fill the bill.
Her Instructions:

**Sugar Cream Pie**

*"Into a 9" piepan, put a nice crust. Into this, put,*

2 Tbls. flour
1 cup sugar

*Mix these with your **fingers**, not with a spoon or fork.*
*YOU MUST NOT PERFORATE THE CRUST!!!*

Then, pour in enough cream (half & half) until your crust is very full.
Mix all the ingredients together, again with your fingers.

Cut about 1 tsp. of butter into little pieces and dot the top of the mixture. Then sift a light dusting of cinnamon on the surface.

Bake at 350° to 375° until the top has browned slightly. Let it cool to "set" before serving. Do not attempt to cut it while hot; it will run badly.

**Son's Note:**

I have the feeling that she made that crust a bit "shorter" or rolled the crust a whisker thicker to forestall the filling soaking through the crust. This recipe was the aged cousin of other "cream" fillings, such as the "chess" pie, some of which relied on further ingredients such as eggs, corn syrup, buttermilk, and brown sugar to produce somewhat of a cross between a true custard and the sugar cream.

Mind you! Mama was not above tinkering with a dependable recipe when the spirit moved her. She forever lost the trust of a star border, who absolutely would not tolerate cottage cheese, when he learned that for years Mama had been "spiking" her custard pies with a tablespoon of fine cottage cheese, well mixed in. (It sort of took off that "overly-sweet" edge that some custard pies may have). He never ate custard again, for even if he COULDN'T taste it, he still wouldn't take a chance!

There is a touch of grudging justice in my nature that compels me to admit that there may have been variations of the above recipe that were worth the notice. Mother did not use the following, nor do I know the original "authors", but here follow two other formulations:

**Brown Sugar Pie**

2 ½ Tbls. flour
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup milk
½ cup cream
1 ½ tsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. butter

Mix well, then bake in 450° oven for 10-15 minutes; then finish at 350°
Let sit to firm-up and cool somewhat before serving.

**Sugar Cream #2**

1 cup white sugar
⅔ cup brown sugar
½ cup flour
½ tsp. salt
1 cup light cream
nutmeg
vanilla

Combine sugars, flour, and salt with 1 cup of boiling water. Stir well. Then add 1 cup light cream, ½ tsp. nutmeg, and ½ tsp. vanilla. Pour into 9" pie crust and bake at 450° for 10 minutes and then reduce heat to 350° for forty more minutes. Cool before cutting.

# Pie Secrets (cont.)

While we are on the subject of pies, I thought I'd put in my two cents (or at least two more pies). These pies are two that we traditionally have on Thanksgiving. I think that Sweet Potato Pie has a much better flavor than the traditional pumpkin (apologies to my co-author's Mother). These recipes came to me from my friend Rick DeCamp and they came to him from various sources. --BB

**Sweet Potato Pie**

1 cup milk
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
2 eggs, slightly beaten
*Mix together in a bowl*
2 tsp. butter
2 cups cooked sweet potatoes (boil in skins, when soft, cool & remove skins)
*Mash together butter and potatoes in a separate bowl, then add to mix*

Pour into uncooked pie shell. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes, reduce heat to 350° and bake for 30-40 minutes.

**Pecan Pie**

1 cup white syrup
1 cup dark brown sugar

1/3 Tbls. salt
1/3 cup melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla
3 eggs beaten
*Mix together and pour into 9" unbaked pie shell*
1 cup (heaping) whole pecans
*Sprinkle over mix*

Bake at 350° in pre-heated oven. Bake approximately 45 minutes.

# Prelude to a Stunning Cheesecake

In a bygone age, there lived at 205 W. 5th Street, Auburn, a lady of broad acceptance of the independent, the authoritative, the opinionated. Into that fascinating group I blundered one day, and I had the temerity to offer an opinion that Shapiro's Cafeteria held Indianapolis's title of "Best Cheesecake in the (My) World". I was rather quickly informed of my error by a visiting relative. She summarily dismissed my admiration for Shapiro's, (which I thought had taken over the mantle of perfection from Sam's Subway on N. Meridian). No, indeed...she cited a much better (and totally unknown to me) baker of her knowledge.

Being the absolute soul of amity and concord, *(cough!)* I let the matter drop. But, subsequently, I became acquainted with the B. Bartels Cheesecake..."Sin in a Springform Pan!"...and now I long to meet that...lady...again. I am prepared to drown amity, swamp concord, and put her in her place. Oh, bother me not that Barry is not in Indianapolis! Charitably granted, Indianapolis is in the world, and Barry's cheesecake will therefore be their best also.

# The World's Best Cheesecake

I'm not usually the type to toot my own horn but since I'm one of the co-authors of this tome if I don't do it it probably won't get done. So, I now modestly present my recipe for the very best cheesecake that you have ever tasted (I have signed testimonials!) It's not exactly what you would consider low-cal and definitely not low cholesterol, but on the bright side, it's so rich you can't eat very much at one time. --BB

**World's Best Cheesecake**

*Line the bottom of a 9 ½ x 3 inch springform pan with parchment paper (makes the cheesecake easier to unmold)*

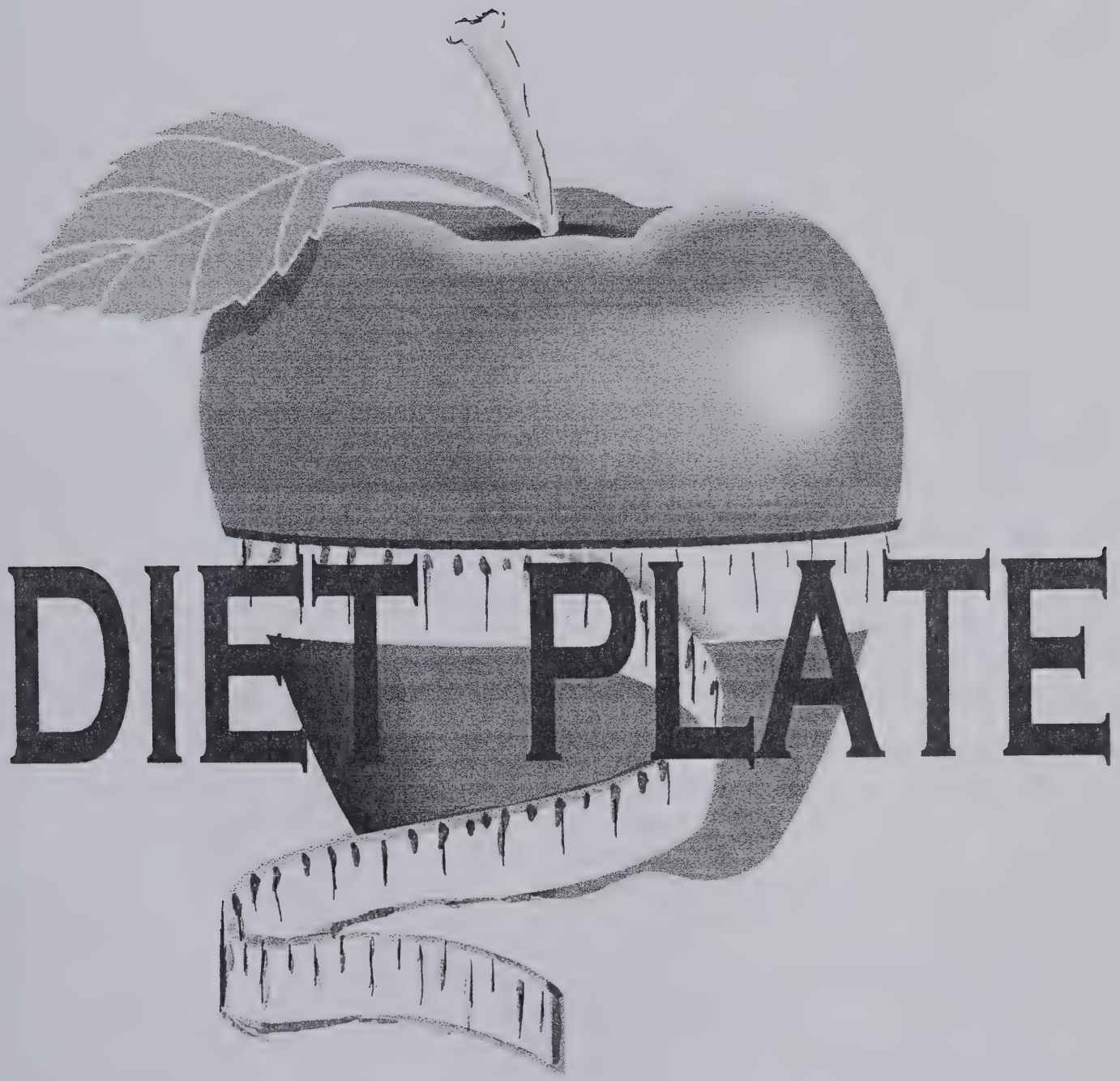
**Crust:**

14 zwieback wafers, crushed
½ cup butter, melted
½ cup sugar
*Mix together and press into the bottom of springform pan and chill*

**Filling:**

3 pounds cream cheese at room temperature
6 eggs
½ cup plus 1 Tbls. cake flour
2 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ cups whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla
Juice of one lemon

Mix ingredients until smooth (one ingredient at a time) and pour into crust-lined pan. On the shelf below cake, place pan with one inch boiling water and bake at 350° for 1 hour or until cake begins to brown on top. Then leave cake in closed oven until cool. Chill cake before unmolding.


DIET PLATE

# DO or DIE(T)!

I have recently enjoyed a catastrophic experience, and while it is a bit short on either sex or chicanery, I feel honor-bound to spring it on the world. I have again joined the American Mass…I am dieting…but with a difference. I AM going to succeed with this diet (as I never really have before). To some extent, all who diet bet their lives on it; and even more so, ME.

I began this diet out of a dire necessity. I had ballooned to over 400 pounds, had developed congestive heart failure, and was entertaining a cluster of varicose ulcers on an "edema-ed" ankle of Olympic proportion. And…I had something of a late-winter cold. But, other than that, I was in the pink (punk) of condition. I was actually bad enough off that I didn't realize that anything was seriously wrong. "After all, fat men are supposed to wheeze and pant, aren't they?" I had half kidded myself into believing that I was just "role-playing!"

When at last I dragged myself (almost literally) to a doctor, he didn't shilly-shally or mince words. "Hospital. NOW!" At that moment, it struck me as some sort of exciting mid-winter adventure, since he didn't mention "Congestive heart failure" or "varicose ulcers". Clever me, I had never tumbled, either!

Lying in the hospital bed next day, gazing back at one GP and one Surgical Specialist, things began to come a bit into focus. Dr. Richard Anningson would attend the heart problem; Dr. Norman Paul would treat the ulcers.

Dr. Paul, "We can try to cure your leg problem and send you back home, or we can also do something about the heart problem while you are here."?

Plucky Little Me, "Sure, why not?", but with no real perception of the real situation—yet!

Dr. Paul, "Well, then, we're going to run some of that water out of you, and we'll put you on a 1,000 calorie *D*I*E*T*." (Rumble of distant thunder?)

And so, it came to pass, that as I lay in my bed of pain ( not really, but for the price of this book, you deserve a little drama/melodrama ), they brought me my first 1,000 calorie diet meal. Off came the insulated cover, and there in the plate lay a bowl of

oatmeal. Now...I am a connoisseur of oatmeals...oatmeal with butter, brown sugar, and half-and-half...all plenteously supplied: oatmeal cooked by my own recipe to end up tender, flaky, delightful. Children, we are NOT talking hospital oatmeal. One spoonful...ONE is all I needed to know that it was going to be a no-calorie breakfast, at least! I stifled a demand that they smear the backside of the cook with the oatmeal, stick her up on the kitchen wall thereby, and pelt her to death with stale toast. For, not realizing the diet was to start so very quickly, I had ordered breakfast the day before from a non-restricted menu and fantasized three strips or maybe six, of SALTY bacon, three eggs in a pool of BUTTER, and four slices of whole wheat toast, DRENCHED in butter. Then, a flotilla of Danish rolls! Egad!

And no, it wasn't the shock of being on a diet that had made me so sensitive to the missing cuisine. I had, after all, had a successful career of unsuccessful diets. After my weight had ballooned to 295 (from 202) in just 9 months of my first college year, I had dieted away 98 pounds in the summer of '52. I had always been able to shed 30 pounds over a summer—any summer. (And, sadly, I would gain back 40 pounds over the following summer!)

I had sometimes kidded myself into believing that I wasn't as large as every mirror told me. Oh, I knew when I began buying size 70 trousers, and 7-8X shirts, that I wasn't a lightweight. In the later years, I had gotten to loath buffet lines, inasmuch as my knees, (long since crippled by degenerative arthritis) made a trip through the line a point of misery . I had joked with my friends on the advantages of size. Whenever I came into a crowded room, there would always be an empty chair for me (even if it had been cleared only a split-second before I started to sit in it!.) I had given up walking any distance, refused to attend public events that involved stairs or fixed seating, and abandoned gardening and lawn care. But none of it had driven me to the diet that I needed.

My doctor? He doesn't nag. He has experienced weight himself, and I think that he knows that words alone will not change a patient's attitude. But, I had begun to tell myself that if, just if...someday...a doctor made a clear and convincing statement about my weight, I might try to do something about it. Nothing like varicose ulcers, CHF, and a hospital to focus the patient's attention on the need...and they did.

But, back to my "bed of pain". Hooked me up with a catheter (brought in a roto-rooter specialist), hooked me up to an IV stand, and began pumping diuretics into me. (My veins being buried in fat, it took probably a dozen (REALLY) holes in me to hook up two successive IVs. [and they didn't use a second one, at that!] ) Well, Niagara poured! In three days on the IV and three days with oral diuretics, we said goodbye to 21,000 cc. of fluid! (10 ½ two liter bottles full) They were returning potassium to my system, and encouraging me to take fluid!, but the above 21,000 equals about 44 pounds! My skin, previously nearly taut and glossy, relaxed and wrinkled in a few strategic areas.

Remarkably, after the first "oatmeal fiasco", the hospital's meals were fairly good. Oh, to be sure, NO SALT, NO FAT, and NO SUGARS. But, they managed to find some very palatable alternatives. It was the first time in years that I had eaten baby beets, and they were ambrosial. The "Alpine Lace" cheese wasn't County Line (but then, neither is "County Line", anymore!) And very interestingly, a bedtime snack, and simple little

vanilla wafers or graham crackers really can taste marvelous. "Just don't eat the whole damned box full, Hubert!" (self instruction)

I came home , after 6 days at DeKalb Memorial Hospital and some fine care, to find a young friend taking time off from his job as a respiratory therapist to look out for me and cushion my return. He in particular, and numerous other friends and fellow Lion members, were refreshingly helpful. As a 70 year old bachelor and the youngest of a septuagenarian family, you wonder, "Who will be there for me when I need them!" I got my heartwarming answer.

Well, Barry the Therapist can ALSO COOK, can he ever! He whipped up a low-cal batch of "Seashells Florentine" (pasta shells, non-fat cottage cheese, low-fat mozzarella , tomato sauce, spinach, and spices) large enough for a supper and 8 batches frozen for future use. I sniffed in derision at Fort Knox, knowing what I had in my fridge.

And, in a subsequent visit from his wife, I learned the existence of low fat or no fat cottage cheese, cheese slices, sour cream, cream cheese, and spaghetti sauce, ( but Friends, read them thar' labels to check the amount of sodium! [I found buttermilk great for taking pulls, but Mercy! The SODIUM!])

HUMOROUS INTERLUDE

"I wasn't living off the fat of the land. I WAS the FAT of the LAND!"

" This weight isn't my fault. It's hereditary. After all, I weighed 137 pounds at birth!"

And there was this funny scene, in 1969, in the Hitachi Kimono Shop in the Tokyo Hilton basement arcade, when the elderly Japanese seamstress measured me for a tailor-made hoppi coat and a yukata (summer bathrobe). She was pretty close to Oriental profanity, I'm sure.

"He's big enough to have two zip codes."

But oddly enough...over the years, almost no one joked with me about my size.

NON-HUMEROUS INTERLUDE

Does it take "will power" to diet successfully? Well, maybe so, but I've found that some honest self-disdain/dislike/loathing may go a bit further. In introspective moments, I came to admit to myself that I felt trapped in a prison of fat, however delightfully achieved. I have a well enough developed sense of style/taste that I envied the slim the things they could wear—colors and patterns that NEVER occurred in a fat man's wardrobe. I hated the awkwardness, the increased difficulty of keeping my body clean. This fat man was not basically a happy fat man; I faked an ebullience I rarely felt.

I read as well as any, and I believe a reasonable portion of the medical world's pronouncements. I could continue to think of myself as a fortunate exception, but I also knew that I could die quite a bit sooner if I were not the exception to the rule. My knees told me that I was not an exception. By January of '95, my heart and my ankles were also telling me that...if I had been astute enough to read my own body.

AND NOW...SECRETS, I SAY **SECRETS** OF MY SUCCESSFUL DIETING

1. Imagination: So you've got to abandon those lovely, two-slices-of-bread sandwiches. So what? Take a loaf of good rye bread, let slices of it largely dry out. Then build a sandwich of fat-free bologna (chicken breast, if you insist), a generous leaf of lettuce, a light touch of a creamy horseradish sauce, a slice of hard bread, the horseradish sauce again, the lettuce again, and finish with the bologna/chicken (it'll be much easier to pick up with the bologna!) So it looks odd. So what...your table habits likely aren't ever going to get you booked on the Orpheum Circuit, anyhow. The sandwich isn't THAT awkward to eat, and it is suprisingly filling and tasty. Alternative "fillings" can include low fat cheeses, onion slices (The author is an onion freak...and a garlic junkie), cucumber slices, tomato...as long as your additions are filling and LOW CAL.
2. Portion control! It doesn't do you any good to eat low calorie foods if you don't also control the quantity. You got as large as you did from overeating...not just high calorie eating. In fact, it would be a shock to many people to know how many unattractive foods were eaten to get fat...foods eaten in boredom or inattention. If you've been used to eating like a thresher, the sight of ½ cup of anything is one big letdown. Tough! So is dying young!
3. Food has frequently been a principal source of satisfaction to you. It must be moderated...possibly replaced by some other satisfaction. Get yourself a good tape measure and a professional , "Doctor's office" scale. Have yourself measured and mercilessly weighed, as you begin the diet. Then, don't jump on that scale every ten minutes to see if you've lost another ounce (rather hard to do, this!) Your doctor will, of course, know that you are on a diet...You'd never have gone on one without consulting him first, would you! Report to the doctor your progress to him (for it will help when your will power sags a bit). It helps to have someone else ALSO checking on your progress. In those moments when you quaver, it's sometimes enough to say to yourself, "But what will my doctor say?
4. As you begin to shed the inches/pounds, try on the clothes that were comfy for you in your fatness. The 2"-4"-6"-8" gap that cap develop at the waistband is a powerful reward for your discipline. And then, try slipping on something that was simply too small for your before. Another shot in the arm as you suddenly find something new (relatively) that doesn't cost you an arm and a leg at the local tent factory. And, relish the compliments you begin receiving about your progress, including...eventually. the richest of all: that they don't seem to trust you quite so implicitly in the presence of their husband/wife!...and, when you sit in a chair in your doctor's office, it's not quite so affectionate. . You find that there's more room under the steering wheel of the family car. And...your rolls of fat, formerly as taut as a cantaloupe, now begin to loosen up and jiggle like the gallons of sugar free gelatin desserts you've been eating. And then, suddenly, it's up and out of a chair without thinking of how your knees are going to hurt; it's up flights of stairs that formerly were about as welcome as, let's say, a 1,000 calorie diet!

You are swinging the doors open, the doors of your prison of fat. You may very well be adding years to your life, and improving their quality also. It IS worth the effort!

Sadly, there are some things that you are going to say a tearful goodbye to, or at least take a long furlough from...most of the cuisine meats...the steaks, well marbled or not; most pork dishes, almost all gravies, watermelon (I pause to weep!) any fruit not canned in its natural juices (and then, in careful moderation); almost all nutmeats (Did you know that a cup of peanut halves come in at 875 calories? Outrageous!) Say goodbye to whole milk, full-cal soft drinks, virtually every snack food (for LO! Our friend, the potato chip has 10-15 calories per chip [and no one eats just one chip]...and the sodium! Gasp!) And cinnamon rolls! (Joe Hardy, in Damn Yankees . Sold his soul to become a good long ball hitter for the Washington Senators. My soul would be in mortal danger if the Devil offered to make cinnamon rolls non-fattening!)

And breads, bagels, English muffins, and hard rolls, and tender baking powder biscuits...you get the nauseating idea!

French fries, and fried chicken, and hamburgers. Now, now, what do YOU think!

Oh, hey! It isn't that you must give all the foregoing forever, but when the pressure becomes unbearable and you allow yourself a blow-out meal, you can try ONE of the above, AND IN MODERATION. You must remember that your stomach has sat there under your ribs for years, functioning as a never-failing, never-in-error adding machine, toting up every calorie. It's still working that way, and an overdone blow-out meal may take several days of strenuous dieting to overcome. But perhaps at every 10 pounds. or 25 pounds lost, one treat.

And summertime and good old all American ice cream? Read the labels, and shop carefully. There are some very low-cal brands...some no-fat yogurts (but keep an eye or the sodium and the calorie count, even if it touts the low-fat angle. Recall that most sundaes are in the 375 calorie range, and the revered banana split come in at a horrendous 1,165 gut-busting, diet-ravaging calories.

But, it's summer, and it's fresh string bean season, and beet season, and various lettuces season, and cucumber season. And, if it's zucchini season or you want to risk sautéed zucchini and onions, T-fal it or Pam it, or use a minimum of olive oil. Stir it a bit more often, and perk it up with herbs, rather than the overload of salt I ..... adore.

Back to that "imagination" bit, given in #1. Boredom is a real problem on your diet. Well, if friends give you useful suggestions...use them!. Look the cookbooks and the TV cooking programs over for ideas. Try some of the exotics, as long as you can control the calories. Seafood, but steamed or baked without the rich sauces are pleasant (But if you open a can of tuna (water packed) or salmon, a whole can for one meal is at least twice what a 1,000 calorie diet will allow!)

Keep a record of what you've eaten. After 6 months, I had forgotten some good diet combos from the first days. Check in with your doctor often. He cares and you need your vital signs monitored carefully. Buy something you'd like to wear, but 2 sizes too small. Then set a goal of shrinking into it in 3-6-9-12 weeks! Try to be modest in the face of the compliments you will be receiving, but remember that if you backslide, you will have made fools of all of those nice people who had faith in you.

# Pasta Shells Florentine

**Pasta Shells Florentine**

1 sm. can sliced mushrooms *coarsely chopped*
½ chopped onion
½ tsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbls. fat-free chicken broth
1 16 oz. container fat-free cottage cheese
1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed & drained
½ cup egg substitute
24 jumbo shell macaroni, cooked and drained
1 jar light spaghetti sauce
2 cups fat-free grated mozzarella cheese
2 Tbls. fat-free Parmesan cheese

Cook mushrooms, onion, garlic, Italian seasoning, and pepper in chicken broth until tender. Remove from heat and stir in cottage cheese, parmesan cheese, spinach and egg substitute. Spoon into the shells. Prepare glass baking dish by spraying with non stick spray and then spread ½ cup of the spaghetti sauce. Arrange the shells in the dish and then top with a layer of the grated mozzarella. Then pour on the rest of the sauce and top with the remaining mozzarella. Bake at 350° for 35 minutes.

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We can:

***Spot it with grease, cooking oil, or butter
(your choice)

***Dog-ear selected pages, subtly letting readers
know your favorite recipes (if they care!)

***Sprinkle flour artfully about it

***Write recipe CORRECTIONS in with #2 pencil, or
common eyebrow pencil, if you prefer

***Scent the book with:
A. imitation vanilla extract
B. cheap Cuban rum
C. onion or garlic juice
D. Old Grandad

Note: The above modifications can be had CHEEEEEEEEPLY, giving your copy ***R*E*A*L***C*O*F*F*E*E***T*A*B*L*E***
I**M**P**A**C**T
( yeah! )

Inquirez-vous of the auteurs.....

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